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Cover photo & this page: Peter Matis/Warwick

BASS PLAYER (ISSN 1050-785X) is published monthly with an extra issue in November by NewBay Media LLC, 1111 Bayhill Drive, Suite 125, San Bruno, CA 94066. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Bruno, CA and at additional mailing offices. Canadian GST No. R13288078, Customer No. 2116057, Agreement No. 40011901. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Bass Player, Box 469069, Escondido, CA 92046.

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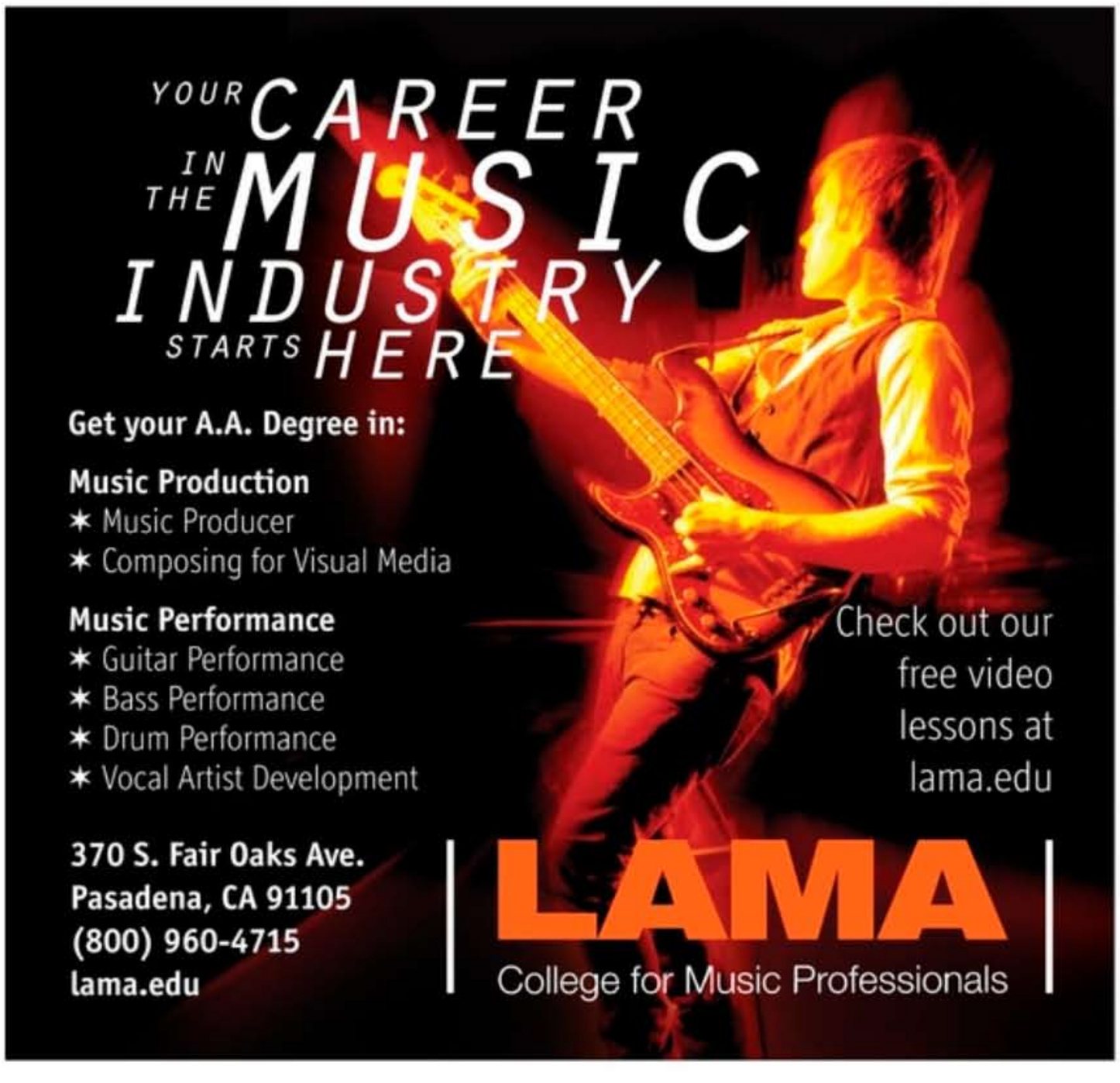

bassplayer

www.bassplayer.com
Vol. 23, No. 12, Holiday 2012

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Subscription orders, inquiries, address changes, and Back Issues:
Bass Player, P.O. Box 469069, Escondido, CA 92046-9069. For quickest service, telephone: 800-234-1831 or (760) 291-1537. bassplayer@pcspublink.com

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COMMUNITY

LOWDOWN

BRIAN FOX

Hang Time

EASILY, ONE OF THE COOLEST THINGS ABOUT THIS GIG IS THE ACCESS IT GRANTS TO people I'd otherwise never meet. Over the last eight years (geez...), I've had the pleasure of chatting and hanging with people who have had a profound impact on my life—from those who inspired me to pick up the bass in the first place (John Paul Jones, Flea) to those whose playing I find both humbling and inspiring today (Bryan Beller, Pino Palladino). Usually, this contact is one-on-one, in a hotel room, on a tour bus, backstage, wherever. To be honest, the encounter can be daunting. After all, I see myself more as a bumbling fanboy than a peer or a "music journalist," a term that's always struck me as pretentious.

It can be stressful when it's a one-on-one encounter, but it's normally nothing a few nerve-steeling shots of espresso can't fix. The tricky bit for me is when I'm confronted by an entire room of my heroes. It's a feeling I get every October at Bass Player LIVE! (Turns out, my guts may be in knots as you read this very column, as this issue hits newsstands around the time of the show.)

Just days ago, I returned from a trip to Germany, where a celebration of Warwick's 30th anniversary brought together such luminaries of the low end as Larry Graham, Leland Sklar, Jonas Hellborg, Stuart Zender, Alphonso Johnson, and this month's cover artist, Steve Bailey. I can only imagine how silly I must have looked at times trying to play it cool in the presence of such amazing talent. At this year's BPL, maybe I'll ask our photographer to snap a few candid shots of me, so I can know how ridiculous my pose really is.

But wait—I actually *do* get the chance to know some of these heroes of mine. And as it turns out, they're a pretty normal, down-to-earth, friendly set (for the most part). I probably don't look nearly as dorky to them as I feel. But the camera never lies. Come back next month to see how I fared in the presence of legends Aston "Family Man" Barrett and Chris Squire, plus dozens more. Yikes—time to get my game face on.

OOPS!

WELL, DANGNABBIT. In our popular Retro-Rama series penned by our bud Dave Pomeroy, we seek to enlighten, courtesy of Dave's insight and context, and titillate, via photographer Mickey Dobo's pretty-as-a-picture ... pictures. So we're bummed to have dropped the ball last month when we ran the wrong photo with Dave's column. Yes, it was a Höfner bass. It just wasn't the right one. What you should have seen is this tomato-hued brute, the Höfner 173 "Artist." Apologies to Dave, Mickey, and the rest of y'all for the error. We hope we didn't cause any huffs. Or would they be höfs?

DIG MY RIG

I'VE BEEN ON BASS NOW for 40 years, playing all styles and venues. I'm proud and very blessed to do it. My current collection, from left to right: 1974 C Wender Kofler upright, 1967 Hofner Beatle bass, 1976 Music Man StingRay, 1970 Fender Precision, 1964 Fender Jazz (fretless—I was young and should have left it original), 2001 G&L L-1505, 2003 Flea Modulus 5, 2004 Peavey Cirrus, reissue Danelectro Longhorn. For amps, I basically use SWR configurations, but I have never found a bass amp I truly love. The SVT comes close.—BUTCH ZIERATH

Got a rig you think we'd dig? Email a photo and a description to digmyrig@gmail.com.

COURT OF OPINION

What would you recommend for a beginning player looking for a bass under $300?

Squier Vintage Modified Jazz.
—Roderick Stewart

Sterling SUB 4 with a maple neck. You guys gave it a great review, and I'm buying one for myself.
—Peter Romano

Raise the budget to $500.
—Michael Fisher

Nothing. He/she'll get discouraged playing such an instrument.
—Bernard Boutet

Used Yamaha BB 424.
—Luca Bertani

I picked up an Ibanez ATK 300 from Musician's Friend. I just love the triple coil pickup and the 3-switch EQ gives you an amazing range of tones.
—Michael Martell

Peavey Millennium. Great tones, playability, and good crafted machine for the beginning player.
—Anthony A. Garcia

Any bass in Samick's Greg Bennett series. I bought a Fairlane 5 years ago and it still plays beautifully.
—Gilbert Shea Kitchens

Ibanez GSR200.
—Bronson Elliot

Jay Turser basses.
—Jeff Jukes

Tanglewood Rebel 4.
—Shea Rider

The Fender Highway One P-Bass I like to gig with these days was $300 used. I've never been able to convince a beginner to wait and let me find them a better than just good used bass, though....
—Lee Barbier

THE REAL WORLD

Clint Pagel

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How did you come to play bass?

I heard the David Lee Roth album *Eat 'Em and Smile* at age 13, and was blown away by the guitar and bass playing. My decision was made when I investigated further into the bass, and found it had so much to offer. I was hooked from then on!

What's a lesson you've learned along the way?

Always listen to as much music as you can, and as many different styles as you can. Try to soak up as much knowledge from all genres, even if it doesn't apply to what you are doing right now, because you never know when you may need it in the future.

What are your musical goals?

To finally finish my solo bass CD, to continue playing live, and increase my presence on the web.

Want to introduce yourself? Find submission guidelines at bassplayer.com/october2012. Get selected for The Real World and receive a set of D'Addario EXL170 bass strings and a T-shirt. All those who submit will receive D'Addario's FretBuzz newsletter.

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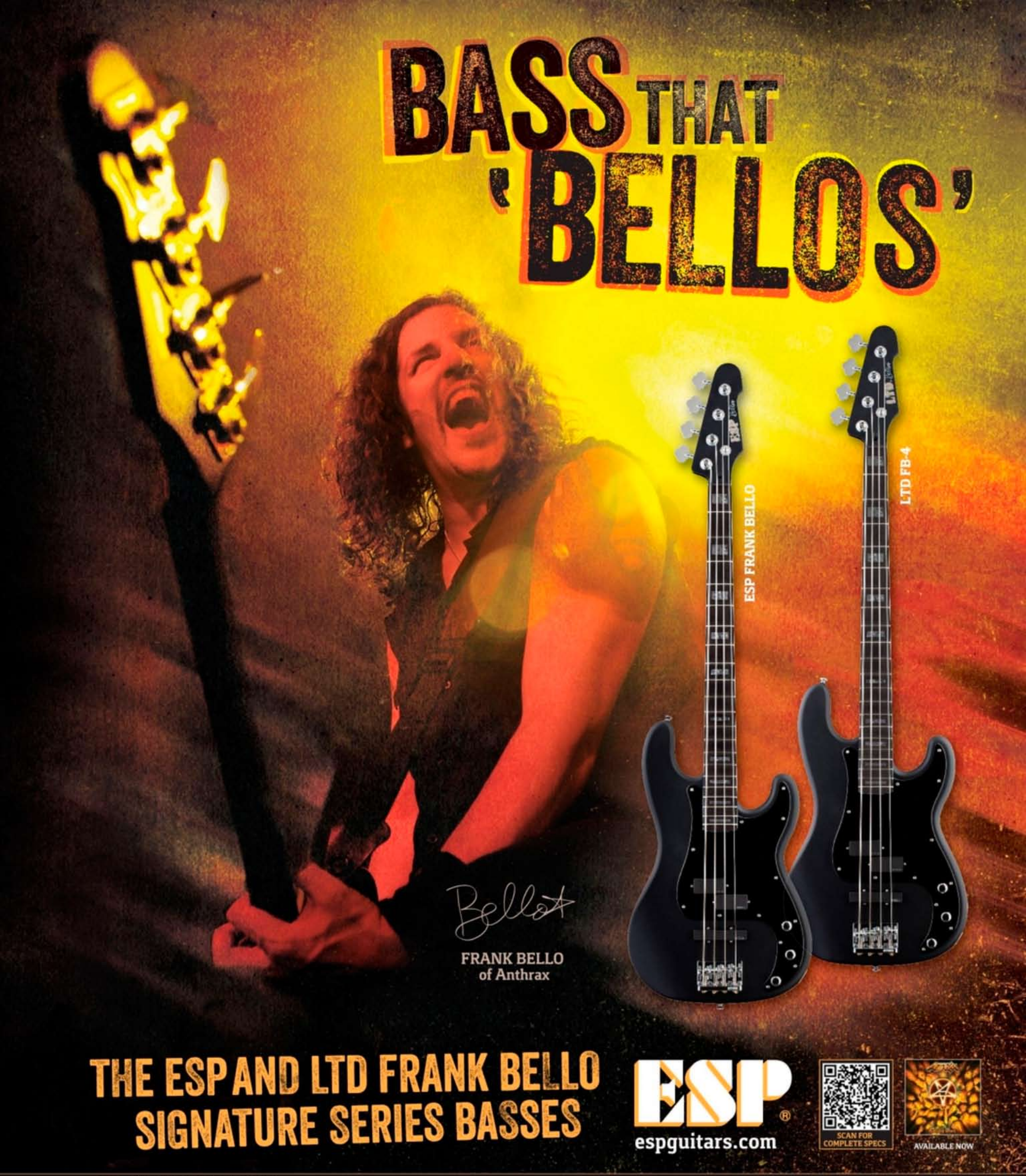

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Jubilee Jam

On September 7th, players from around the globe converged on the Warwick factory in Markneukirchen, Germany to celebrate the company's 30th anniversary. To mark the occasion, an elite crew recorded the third installment of Warwick's tour-bus jam, Fuss on the Buss. Top, from left: Jonas Hellborg, Jäcki Reznicek, Victor Brandt, Just Wody, T.M. Stevens, Alphonso Johnson, Steve Bailey, Ryan Martinie, Dave Roe, Larry Graham, Ralphe Armstrong, Guy Pratt, Stuart Zender. Sitting, from left: John B. Williams, Kevin "Brandino" Brandon, Jeroen Paul Thessling, Andy Irvine, Antonella Mazza, Leland Sklar, Hansford Rowe, Regi Wooten.

BASSNOTES

GLASSJAW

Manny Carrero

Coloring Bass

BY JON D'AURIA

INFO

LISTEN

Glassjaw, *Coloring Book* [merchdirect.com, 2011]

coloring book

EQUIP

Bass 1992 Fender Precision Bass Plus
Rig Ampeg SVT-2PRO, Ampeg 8x10
Effects Line 6 X3 POD
Strings DR Strings Hi Beams (.045–.105)

YOU DON'T TYPICALLY FIND HEAVY DUB BASS vibes in a post-hardcore metal band, but Glassjaw has never been one for convention. On the group's latest EP, *Coloring Book*, founding bassist Manny Carrero's signature fast finger work is still a big part of the band's sound, but he often slows down and makes space for big, smooth bass tones.

The bass on *Coloring Book* often takes on a strong dub flavor.

It's really just what bass is at its core in every sense of the term. It has this smooth low end that isn't overly processed or compressed, which showcases the techniques I'm using. This bass tone is about filling up all of the space in the bass register. It provides a foundation that you can almost sit or float on.

How did you create that tone?

We tried to get the tone with my live rig, but couldn't. So our guitarist Justin Beck and I looked for the sounds in the studio using our Line 6 setup. Really, this tone comes from playing up high on the neck to get that really soft dub tone, as opposed to getting a lot of attack. Playing on the drop *D* [bottom] string above the 9th fret is where you get the warmest and most prominent tones on the bass.

You've been playing your Fender P-Bass Plus since Glassjaw started.

It's the most comfortable bass I've ever played. It's not exactly the same shape as a P-Bass; the low cutaway is deeper, and the neck is a thinner than on a P-Bass, but thicker than on a Jazz Bass. I don't like playing anything else.

Do you prefer the new bass vibe of Glassjaw to the heavier sound on past albums?

I spent a lot of time in my early career trying to show people what I could do. At some point I listened back and realized it sounded like I was trying too hard. I often wished I could play in a dub/reggae band and just sit back and groove; I got to live out that fantasy on this record. I can zone out and fall into the pocket instead of having to anticipate when a crazy fill or change is coming in—although there's still plenty of that in our set. **BP**

FLORENCE + THE MACHINE

Mark Saunders

Feel Not Flash

BY JON D'AURIA

THE RIGHT BREAK CAN CHANGE A MUSICIAN'S life. It certainly has for Mark Saunders of Florence + The Machine, which quickly went from gigs in British bars to touring the world's largest venues. "Three years ago we were playing clubs where we were cramped to fit my amp onstage, and now I have a riser to myself," he says. "It was a bit of a fast curve." The transition came naturally for Saunders, as his years of fine-tuning his playing and studying jazz fueled his desire to perform at the highest level. Putting taste before flash, Saunders is proving how important the supporting role is on Florence's haunting breakout album, *Ceremonials*.

I understand Florence was against having bass in the band before you joined.

For whatever reason, she wasn't a fan of having bass in the group. But she did a European tour with the White Stripes, and they offered her their bass player to do a couple of songs each night. When they got back from the tour, they knew it was about time they got a bass player. So they auditioned around a dozen people. Fortunately enough, I landed the gig.

What role would you say bass plays in this music?

It's funny because Florence has gone from not liking bass to regarding it as very important. Now she wants a lot of drums and massive low end, so I'm experimenting with synth sounds to try to get some stage-rumbling tones. But the album has some more relaxed, even sensual songs where I try to make the bass as sweet as it can be. She likes the whole spectrum for bass.

Describe your technique.

It's a range with Florence. I have to dig in and play quite hard for some parts, and I have to play soft on others. It's not a gig for fancy fills. There have been times when I tried to throw a few bits in, but it really doesn't have a place with the Machine. I have a couple of solo slots, but otherwise I'm backing Florence's vocals and homing in on the kick drum.

How did you first become a bassist?

I started playing when I was 12. The big thing that inspired me was Jamiroquai's original bassist, Stuart Zender, who made sounds that were just incredible. He was so versatile; I just had to know what instrument he was playing. My family moved to Thailand, and we met a chap named David who showed me the great bass players and taught me to play with feel and not flash, but to learn the flash, too. I went back to the U.K. when I was 17 and got a degree in jazz music, and I just kept on playing to this day. **BP**

INFO

LISTEN

Florence + The Machine, *Ceremonials* [Island, 2011]

EQUIP

Basses Lakland Joe Osborn, Lakland Bob Glaub Signature
Rig Two Markbass Classic 300 heads, Markbass 108 8x10 cabinet
Effects MXR Blow Torch, Markbass Distorsore, Markbass Super Synth, Markbass Super Booster, Moog Moogerfooger MF-101 Lowpass Filter
Strings Rotosound 66 Medium

KERRI-KELTING LESLIE

POINTS NORTH, LYRICS BORN

Uriah Duffy

Jazzed Up J

BY JIMMY LESLIE

URIAH DUFFY IS A BASS NINJA WHO IS currently in the progressive instrumental trio Points North, subs for Starship, has played with both Whitesnake and the Family Stone, and has recording credits including Alicia Keys and Christina Aguilera. Duffy is a monster technician who incorporates "a mixed bag of efficient techniques such as fretting-hand hammered notes, muted claw-hammer plucking, and double thumbing" as he deftly switches styles and jumps genres. One constant is his heavily modified Fender Jazz Bass.

How did you get into modifying Jazz Basses?

I bought my first Jazz Bass barely used for $125 and fell in love with the fat, versatile sound. I love building and tinkering, so I dove right in whenever I felt an improvement could be made. No customization has to be permanent—everything is reversible! In 2008 I gutted and customized my J, and I've since developed a formula for turning Mexican and Japanese Jazz Basses into superior instruments on the cheap.

What was your first step?

The first and foremost overall improvement is a bridge replacement. The stock bridge is of little use other than anchoring the strings. I installed a Leo Quan Badass II replacement that cost under $100, and I could instantly feel the whole bass vibrate the way it should. I noticed improved intonation and action as well. Then, I change the pickups. I like Bartolinis because they have an even sound that's very versatile. It's easy to open up your bass, follow the existing pickup wires, unsolder them, and then solder the new ones.

I upgrade the tuners next. I love Hipshot parts; Hipshot Ultralite tuners are small and easy to install. I'm currently using their bigger, four-screw plate tuners for extra resonance and added stability. I always install a Hipshot Xtender key. I am currently trying out their neat new Double Stop, which facilitates two different detuned pitches with a flick of the same lever.

What's the final functional change?

I like to install a preamp. I prefer a defeatable preamp, which means it can always go back to passive mode. I've experimented with John East J-Retro and Aguilar OBP-3 preamps. Both are very transparent with EQs that can provide substantial control. I use EQ sparingly. The J-Retro is easy to install; the Aguilar is awesome, but installation is more involved. Instructions are included.

Where did you get the groovy lights for your J's fingerboard?

I sent the neck to England, where Martin Sims installed blue LED position markers. They can be seen from the back of a stadium, and the side dots light up, too.

What does it feel like to play your own modded J?

I feel very connected to my instrument, and it's reassuring to know I can fix things myself. I encourage every player to try building your own bass. It's empowering, educational, and it doesn't have to cost a lot. **BP**

INFO

LISTEN

Lyrics Born, *As U Were* [Decon Inc, 2010]; Whitesnake, *Live...In the Shadow of the Blues* [Dragonshed, 2006]

EQUIP

Bass Fender Standard Jazz Bass with Leo Quan Badass II bridge, Bartolini pickups, Hipshot hardware, Aguilar OBP-3 preamp, and Sims Custom LED position markers

Rig TC Electronic RH750 head, TC Electronic RS210 & RS410 cabinets

Strings DR Strings MM-45 Marcus Miller Medium Fat-Beams, DR MH-45 Medium Lo-Riders

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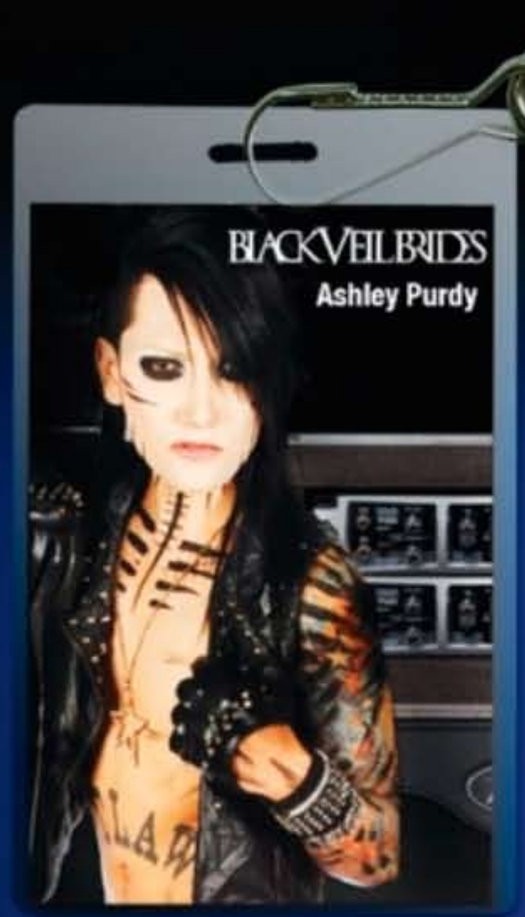

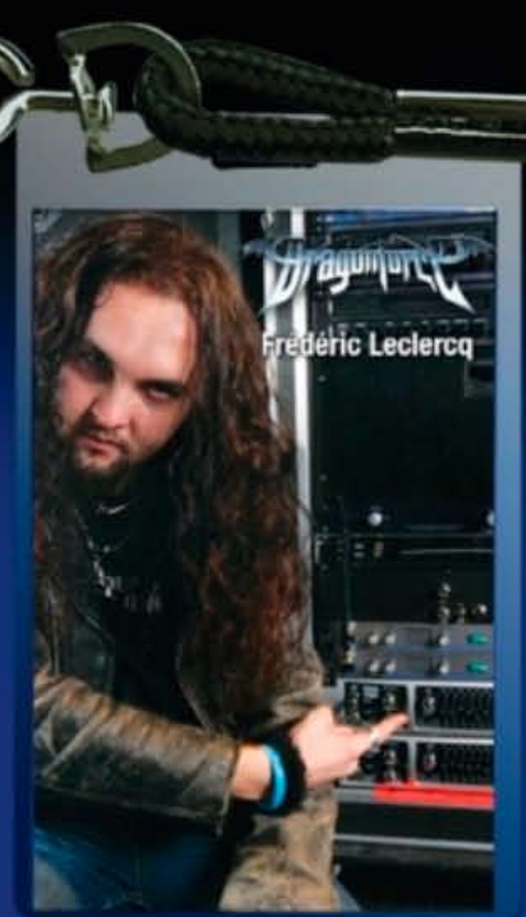

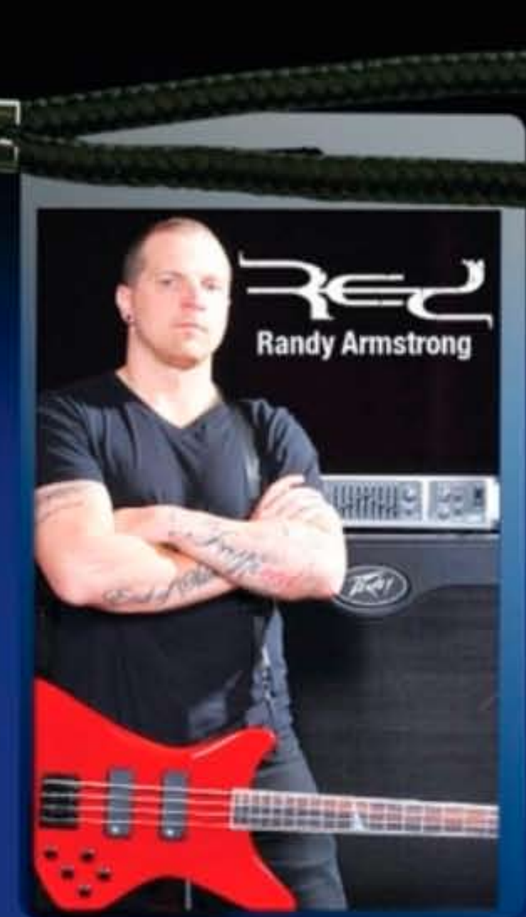

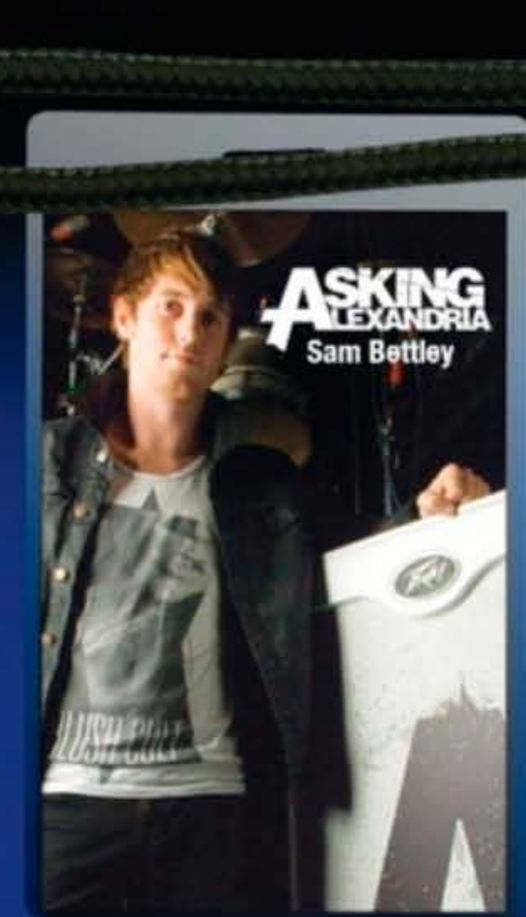

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Cubbie Fink

Pumped Up Licks

BY JON D'AURIA

WHEN CUBBIE FINK FIRST BEGAN PLAYING BASS guitar, he had very little interest in playing keyboard bass, and even less interest in playing bass with a pick. Years later, his key-bass synth playing and pick-muted lines landed him a hit single with Foster the People's "Pumped Up Kicks," which has found something of a permanent home on Billboard charts. Though he still prefers to play electric bass with his fingers, his willingness to take on new techniques has certainly paid off.

All of the playing styles Fink draws upon lend his band's album authenticity in its genre-hopping between alternative and electro-pop. After two years of heavy touring, Fink and his bandmates are preparing to embark on FTP's sophomore album, which is looking to delve even deeper into the world of electronic music.

What was the recording process like for your CD *Torches*?

We got to track in EastWest studios in the same room that the Beach Boys tracked Pet Sounds, so that was really special to us. The drum and bass parts were recorded in a big open room. I was running through a vintage Ampeg SVT rig, and the area gave my tone a huge sound. I recorded with my 1972 Fender Telecaster Bass. It has sick bottom end, but is also really gain-y. Its overdrive and grit was ideal for me.

You have some great pick-muted parts on the record.

I've always been more of a fingerstyle guy. When I was younger I thought using a pick was a copout, but I realize now that there are songs where a pick is necessary to get a distinct tone. It first dawned on me when I would listen to Paul McCartney use one on certain songs where it sounded awesome.

You also play a lot of keyboard bass on this material.

I started taking piano lessons about a year before this project started. I grew up dabbling with every instrument except keys. My dad was a drummer, so I would beat on those. I played guitar for a while, and then moved on to clarinet and sax, and eventually bass. Now I do a lot of synth-bass parts live. I'm definitely still learning, but it's been cool to utilize what I've learned immediately.

What elements are most important to you regarding bass tone?

I've always liked a balanced blend of deep, thick low end with midrange and treble that cuts enough to make the bass heard in the mix. I've never been a fan of bass that is solely treble. I like it when I can hear and feel the bass but can make out each note individually. I love the active-bass jazz fusion tone. That sound always sticks in my subconscious.

What can we expect from the sound of the next album?

We're very curious ourselves. We played over 400 shows last year, so we've gelled together as a band and as musicians. This time around, writing and recording will be much different. I definitely want to start exploring the world of pedals. I've never really gotten into that, and currently I don't use any, but I'm starting to build a pedalboard. I'm excited to explore the sounds that I can get and try to get some dubstep sounds and synth sounds from my bass so I don't have to switch over to keys as much. **BP**

INFO

LISTEN

Foster The People, *Torches* [Columbia, 2011]

EQUIP

Basses 1972 Fender Telecaster Bass, Fender Tony Franklin Precision Bass, Fender Blacktop Jazz Bass
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Strings D'Addario XL Medium (.050–.105)
Synth MicroKorg XL

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NATALIA BALCERSKA

BP RECOMMENDS

BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME
THE PARALLAX II: FUTURE SEQUENCE [Metal Blade]

Tired of metal records with plinkety-plink bass parts buried by down-tuned guitars? This ferocious and diverse sci-fi concept album was made for you. The grooves are heavy, the production is pristine, and **Dan Briggs**' Spector 5-string is large and in charge, tackling every riff and providing ballsy counterpoint to the fusion-ish proceedings. Don't miss his fretless feature on "Lay Your Ghosts to Rest." —E.E. BRADMAN

ALFONSO LOVO
LA GIGANTONA [Numero Group]

Recorded in Nicaragua in 1976, this long-thought-lost jazz-rock fusion gem survived a full-scale civil war—and if that weren't enough, it also features Santana's Jose "Chepito" Areas on percussion and a little-known electric bassist named **Roman Cerpas**, who cut his teeth with early-'70s Latin space-funk band Bwana. His serpentine lines make cuts like "La Bomba de Neutrón" and "Tropical Jazz" flow with a *Sextant*-like sensuality even Buster Williams could dig into. —BILL MURPHY

THE COUP
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU [Anti-]

Oaktown roots run deep, so you can always count on Boots Riley and the Coup to mix some gritty funk into their distinctive brand of politically charged hip-hop. Lucky for us, that also means no fewer than five different bassists on the jam-packed *Sorry to Bother You*, with standouts that include **Damion Gallegos**' distorted take on Larry Graham ("The Magic Clap") and **Uriah Duffy**'s steady and hypnotic pocket ("The Gods of Science"). —BILL MURPHY

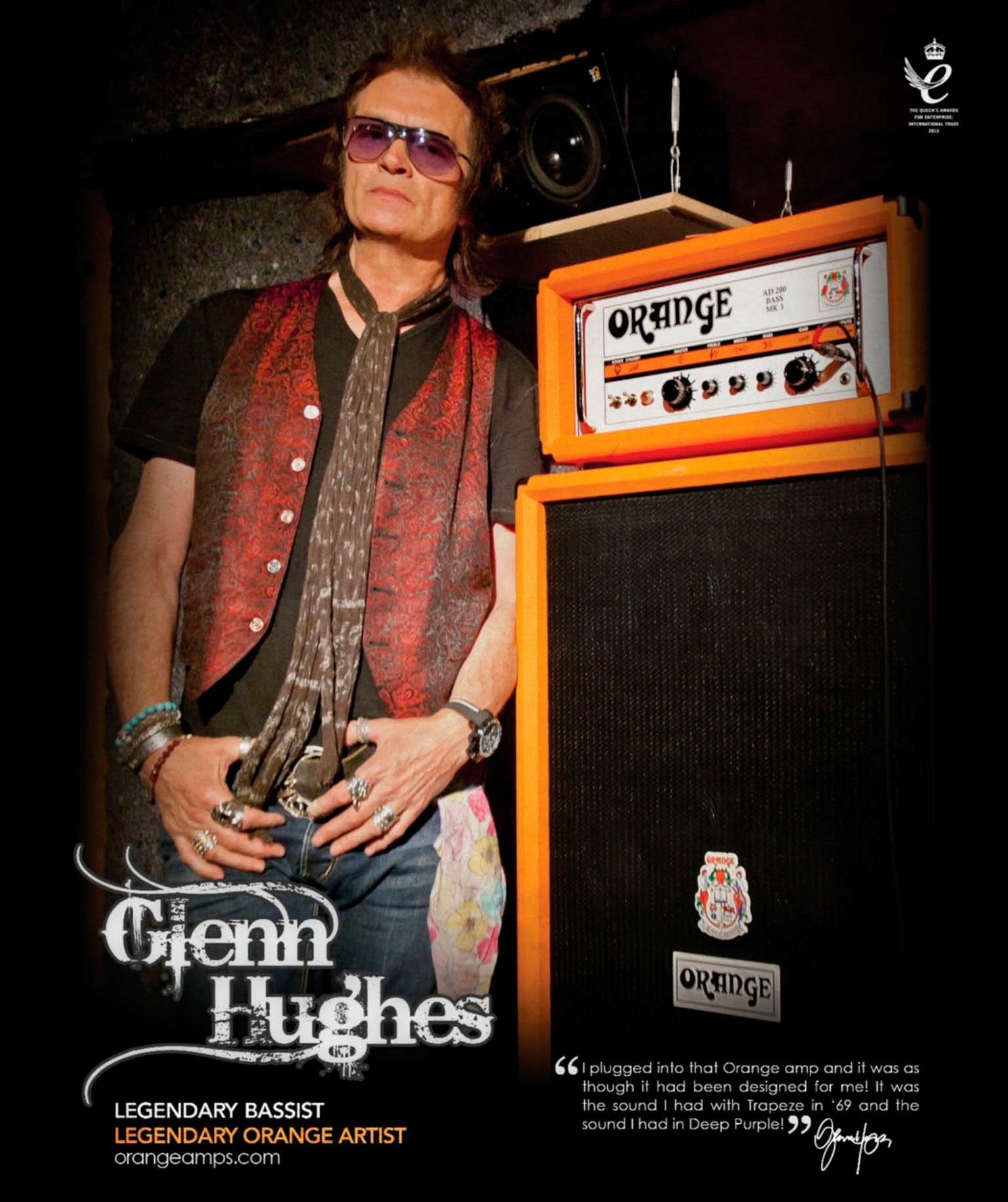
MACEO PARKER
SOUL CLASSICS
[Razor & Tie]

On this high-energy live set starring James Brown sax legend Maceo Parker, backed by Cologne's WDR Big Band, **Christian McBride** puts his long-professed passion for JB and vintage soul front and center. McBride (on his flatwound-strung Fender Jazz and Atelier Z 5-string) and guest drummer Core Coleman-Dunham respectfully replicate and renovate such retro feels as "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag," "Rock Steady," "Higher Ground," and "I Wish." His reward is solo space on "Soul Power," which he turns into a sick, syncopated groove step-out. —CHRIS JISI

JAMIROQUAI
ROCK DUST LIGHT STAR [EMG]
THE DARK SINATRAS
SICK SOCIETY [Defectoscope Sounds]

High-stepping into his best-known role, on Jamiroquai's well-worth-the-wait latest dance disc, **Paul Turner** reminds us that nothing makes four-on-the-floor funkier than a snaky bass line that adds tension to the groove while providing a foil for the melody. Witness the octave-enhanced ostinato on "White Knuckle Ride," the pick-up mastery of "Smoke and Mirrors," the precision gallop of "All Good in the Hood," and the in-the-cracks fill fest "She's a Fast Persuader."

On the flipside, Turner goes medieval on his axe in the post-metal power trio the Dark Sinatras. Teamed with guitarist/vocalist Mark White and drummer Ed Laubinger, the group's ominous debut smacks of smart grooves and lyrics without being preachy, pretentious, or predictable. Dig the dual feels and slap break on "The Power of Tradition," the broken 16ths that ground "Absolution" (in 7/4) and "Three Shades of Empty," and the walloping riff of "Optimus." Paul, it's safe to say, does it all. —CHRIS JISI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RETRO-RAMA

1968 Gretsch 6071

BY DAVE POMEROY | PHOTO BY MICKEY DOBO

THE 1950S AND '60S WERE GOOD TIMES FOR GRETSCH. The company was founded in 1883 in Brooklyn by Friedrich Gretsch and initially specialized in making banjos, tambourines, and drums, and enjoyed a strong growth period in the first half of the 20th century. But then, three incredibly influential musicians—Chet Atkins, Duane Eddy, and George Harrison—became the titans of guitar, and all of them made their mark

MICKEY DOBO

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with hollowbody Gretsch instruments that are still iconic today. Although Gretsch's basses never had huge sales success, those built in the mid 1960s are unique, versatile, and beautiful instruments. The company was sold in 1972 to Baldwin, but it eventually came back under the control of Fred W. Gretsch, and today is a part of the Fender family of brands.

This 6071, courtesy of Music City Pickers, is in excellent shape. The classic brown transparent finish is still gorgeous, and the painted *f*-holes, real or not, look cool. The bass is hollow on the back, which has a plastic plate about six inches around covering the hole, which is in turn covered by the Gretsch "snap-on" vinyl scratch protector.

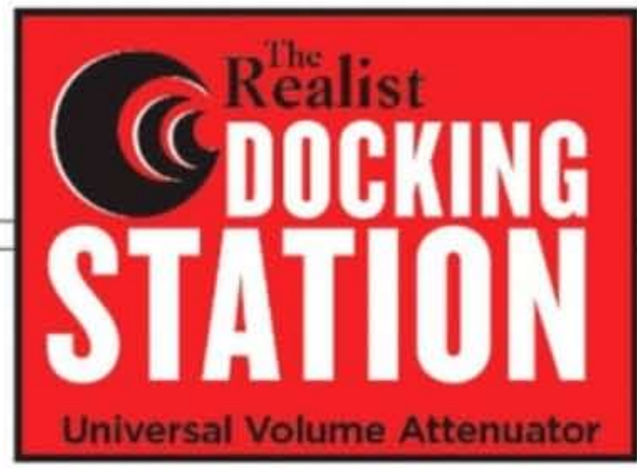
The 6071 made its debut in 1968, along with its two-pickup cousin, the 6173, which I profiled back in May '05. The double-pickup version became known as the "Monkee Bass" thanks to Peter Tork's playing it on television and on tour at the time, although it was never an official signature model. The series was discontinued in 1972. Based on Gretsch's Tennessean guitar's body shape and style, the 6071 is a hollowbody short-scale bass with serious depth and vibe rarely found in the bass-as-modified-guitar approach that many companies, including Gretsch and Gibson, pursued in the '50s and '60s.

The long, thick body, chunky neck, and large headstock make it easy to forget it's a 30"-scale instrument. The 6071 is loud acoustically, with no apparent dead spots. Once you plug it in, the single Super-Tron pickup enhances the natural resonance of the bass beautifully. It sits a little farther back than most single-pickup basses, and to my ear it is perfectly placed. It has a near-ideal blend of warmth and bite, and is very sensitive to finger position. It is one of the few basses I have ever played that can go from a fat McCartney tone to a crisp Jaco-like mid-range bark with a flip of a switch and slight change in right-hand position.

The electronics layout is a bit convoluted, especially for a single-pickup bass, but it's not too hard to figure out. There is a master volume on the lower bout, two 3-way switches, and a switch for the felt string mute—more on that later. The switch on the upper bout is a 3-way tone modifier: flat in the middle, bass boost when flipped up, and a mid boost in the down position. Combined with the optimum position of the pickup, a surprising number of cool tone variations are available. The other 3-way switch is one of my pet peeves, the kill switch. It turns the bass off when it is in the middle position, for reasons I will never completely understand.

The lone remaining switch controls the position of the string mute. When engaged, it exerts just enough pressure to mute the strings, but not choke them. The felt on this bass is in really good shape, and this mute is one of the best sounding I have run across. As a fan and practitioner of palm muting, I am usually pretty skeptical of these types of mutes, but this one is superb—it's great for reggae, blues, or simulating upright-type tones.

Overall, this is one of the nicest short-scale basses I have played in a long time. It has a full, rich tone to match its good looks, with a few subtle variations on the plus side and really has no bad sounds, other than the "off" switch! It may not be a Monkee, but the 6071 definitely swings, and it can hold its own in the jungle. Until next time, peace, love, and grooves to you all! **BP**



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~ Jon Burton
FOH - The Prodigy.

"Folks don't realize how hard it is to make multiple guitar channels live happily together. With a JDX, mic placement is no longer an issue."

~ Bradley Johnson
FOH - Aerosmith, Whitesnake.

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~ Jim Warren
FOH - Radiohead, Arcade Fire, Nine Inch Nails.

"I was looking to make the bass 'poke' through in my mix so I tried the JDX. It's a great alternative to mic'ing a dirty cab. I've been using it ever since."

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~ Eddie Mapp

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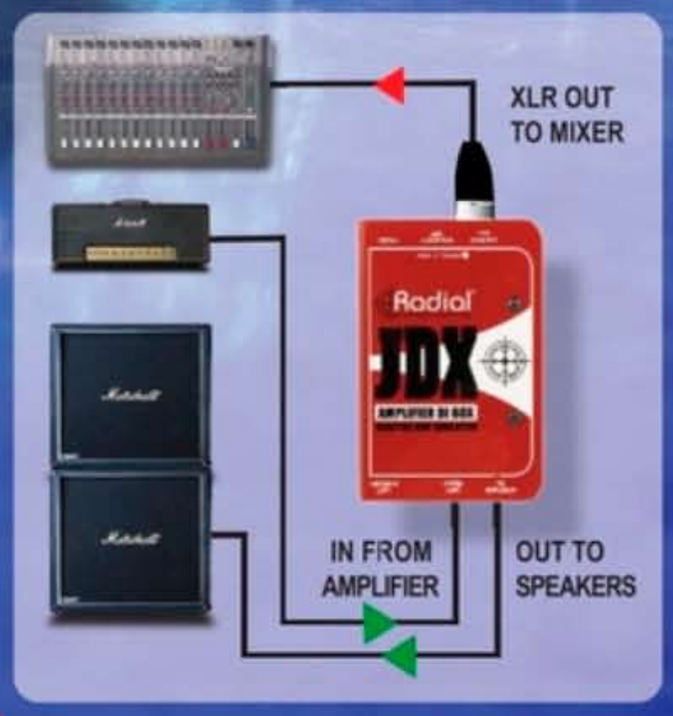

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Street $350

Contact petersontuners.com

FENDER Relic La Cabronita "Boracho" Bass

Like a drunk, potty-mouthed uncle from a bygone era, the Boracho sports a curious combination of interesting attributes—reverse lightweight ash Jazzmaster body, single Thunderblade pickup, Greasebucket tone circuit—and marries them to a one-piece maple neck with a "U"-shaped profile. Finished in black and "reliced," the bass comes with a limited-edition case, strap, cable, polishing cloth, Custom Shop pics, and a certificate of authenticity.

Street $6,000

Contact fender.com

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Vox's StompLab IB and IIB stompboxes each boast 100 presets—including wah, octaver, ring mod, chorus, flanger, delay, and compression—plus amp and cab modeling, a tuner, 24-bit A/D and D/A conversion, and a combination audio/headphone output. The 2B adds an expression pedal that gives you control of effect parameters in real time. Both pedals run on either four AA batteries or an AC adapter.

Street $70 (IB), $90 (IIB)

Contact voxamps.com

ACG EQ02 preamp

Fans of Alembic and Wal filter-based preamps would do well to check out English luthier Alan Cringean's EQ-02 preamp, which gives each pickup its own lowpass filter. The EQ02, co-designed with John East, features a volume/blend stack, treble filter stack, bass filter stack, lowpass filter, as well as internal separate gain controls for each pickup input.

Street From $240 (for one-pickup, three-knob configuration) to $265 (for two-pickup, five-knob configuration)

Contact acguitars.co.uk

FUZZROCIOUS Heliotropic fuzz pedal

This aluminum pedal, inspired by bassist Greg Edward's grizzly, gnarly tone on the 1996 Failure song "Heliotropic," is built for fuzz fans who jump at the idea of a modified Electro-Harmonix Big Muff circuit juiced by a preamp. The Heliotropic's true bypass and its controls (pre-gain, sustain, volume, and tone) aim to make it more than a one-trick pony, though: Your rumble can go from gentle to catastrophic, or anywhere in between.

Street $250

Contact fuzzrociouspedals.com

JACKSON KELLY Bird Basses

The latest additions to Jackson's JS series are two 21-fret, basswood-body 4-string bolt-ons, both the result of a collaboration between Jackson Guitars and David Ellefson. The JS2 Kelly Bird IV, equipped with volume/volume/tone controls, is available in burnt cherry sunburst and matte black; the JS3 Kelly Bird IV, with its 3-band active EQ, is available in trans black and trans blue burst. Both basses feature rosewood fingerboards, dual Jackson JS high-output covered pickups, Jackson high-mass bridges, Jackson tuners, and block inlays.

Street $400–$465 (JS2), $500 (JS3)

Contact jacksonguitars.com

VERELLEN Meatsmoke preamp

With its tough black steel enclosure, old-school birch panels, no-B.S. lettering, and vaguely threatening name, the tube-driven Meatsmoke might look like an unsophisticated oaf of a pedal. But besides its 3-band EQ, gain control, and master volume, the Meatsmoke boasts high- and low-output modes, a dedicated recording output (a speaker-simulating filter with two levels of intensity), high-quality components, true bypass, a regulated dc filament supply, and a footswitchable overdrive boost.

Street $700

Contact verellenamplifiers.com

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YAMAHA

Chat WITH THE CHAIR

PHIL FARNSWORTH

Steve with Berklee instructors John Patitucci (L) and Victor Bailey (R)

AS THE NEW HEAD OF BERKLEE'S BASS DEPARTMENT, STEVE BAILEY IS SURFING THE EDUCATION WAVE.

BY CHRIS JISI

IT'S A BRISK EARLY-SPRING NIGHT ON MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE IN BOSTON. In front of the Berklee College of Music's 150 building, a lone figure with his coat collar pulled up and hat pulled down sits unassumingly among the packs of students out for a midnight smoke break. He listens as they discuss musical favorites and hopes and dreams between drags. Earlier, Steve Bailey was all but a ghostly presence shadowing the inside rooms to gauge the musical goings on. The next day, he would interview for chair of Berklee's Bass Department and become only the second person ever to hold the esteemed position.

For Bailey, this kind of preparation is typical. Remarkably centered and focused, Steve has a calm energy about him with which he is able to take in everything while simultaneously thinking three steps ahead. He's also one of those rare sorts who enjoys the journey as much as the destination. Still, the high-profile hire likely led to some double-takes around Beantown and the music scene at large. But for those who know the 52-year-old native of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, the choice was right in the pocket.

Bailey's bass career, which began at age 12 and quickly took a jazz turn when he heard Stanley Clarke on Return To Forever's *Light as a Feather* [Polydor, 1972], mirrors a modern bass timeline. Attending both the University of North Texas and Miami's fabled music programs, and befriending Jaco Pastorius at the latter, he paid his dues in New York City (with trumpet icon Dizzy Gillespie) and Los Angeles, where he cracked the jazz and rock touring and session scenes, while also helping to put the Musicians Institute's Bass Institute of Technology on the map. Along the way, he carved his own notch on the bass beltway with his technical and

PETER MATIS/WARWICK

musical innovations on the fretless 6-string bass. And just as the information superhighway was changing the way bassists learned, Bailey teamed with Victor Wooten to forever blur the line between performer, educator, and bass hero—not to mention redefining the concept and musical veracity of the multi-bass ensemble, in all shapes and sizes. Further embracing academia through camps with Wooten and on his own, and via a music professor position at Coastal Carolina University, Bailey was more than ready for his new Boston seat. He, and we, just didn't realize it at first.

You're known primarily as a performing bassist. What led you to decide to devote most of your time to education at this point in your career?

It's the result of an evolution that began when I started doing bass camps with Victor Wooten. I was just turning 40 and had decided to leave L.A. and move back to South Carolina to eventually raise a family. The camps became more frequent, and like many of my peers, the older I got the more important educating younger musicians became—giving back and sharing the knowledge I'd gained, instead of always being on the road promoting myself. I would have been blissfully happy splitting my time between Coastal Carolina University, the camps, and performing, and then the Berklee opportunity came up. What I've learned is the minute you think you have it all figured out and your life is gonna roll a certain way, things can change. Today, my life has taken a major turn for the better, for me and my family, and I'm very excited by it.

What can you reveal about your journey to the Bass Department chair?

I heard about the opening from a friend, and I went to Berklee's website to see the job description. I felt qualified, although I wasn't that interested—but I soon realized it was a once in a lifetime opportunity, so I sent in my application. About a month later, I was one of five finalists. Each of us would have meetings and make a presentation to the faculty, dean, provost, Search Committee, and president. In short it was an audition, although they don't call it that in academia. I did my best to demonstrate my confidence in my ability to lead a department of this magnitude, and to display effective communication skills, which is essential. I never actually played a note, which I think surprised some people. Also, some on the committee were curious as to why I wanted the job. To be honest, I wasn't *truly* sure I wanted it when I left home for the audition.

What clinched it for you?

I asked them to fly me in a day early so I could just walk around and hang out, anonymously. I went to the 150 Mass. Ave. building that night, which has the practice and studio facilities, and man, the energy level was so high; I hadn't experienced that since my student days at North Texas and Miami. I stopped and listened to people practicing and groups playing; at midnight it was humming like a beehive. Then I stepped outside and just listened to the conversations, and it was infectious. I went back to my hotel at 1 AM, with my audition in the morning, and I didn't sleep at all; the music just kept running through my head. I stopped by there the next morning and it was still going on! So that was what I told the dean in my interview. I said, when I got here I felt if I wasn't offered the job it would be a relief, because I would have no big decisions to make and my life could continue along the happy path it was on. But after spending last night at the 150 building and getting the vibe, today, if I don't get this job I'll be really disappointed! Soon after, I was told the position was mine.

What's your vision for the program?

Rich Appleman had 40 great years in which he, assistant chair John Repucci, and an amazing faculty developed the bass department into the widely respected, top program it is—so my first major goal is just to not break anything! I've got a great faculty, some of whom have been there for 30 years, and John nearly 40. That said, I was hired to lend my vision for the continued evolution of the department, and that's my goal. I haven't gotten into too many specifics yet, but one of my objectives is to create a doubling major. At present you have to choose electric or upright, but I think there's a select group of people who deserve the chance to major in both. I know I would have wanted that when I went to

What Did He Say?

STEVE PARKER

Victor Wooten

They've been the yin and yang of the bass world since the late '80s, brothers from another mother, and musical foils for each other. So of course Victor Wooten is celebrating Steve Bailey's new position at Berklee. Live onstage for his *Words and Tones* tour that began in the summer and continues through year's end, Victor enthusiastically introduces Steve each night as "the Grand Poobah, the Dumbledore, the Head Honcho, the newly appointed chair of the Bass Department at the prestigious Berklee College of Music." In turn, Bailey credits Wooten with sage advice during the hiring process that enabled Steve to land the position. Of his guidance, Wooten says, "One of my recommendations was, rather than going in and telling them all the things he could do to make the school better, he should reiterate the fact that Berklee is already an incredible institution and has always been a world leader in music education. I told him to compliment the people he was talking to for making it that way. And I added that he not waste time trying to make himself look good. He already looked good to them, and that was why he was a finalist. Instead, tell them how honored he is to be considered, and share a few ideas about what he could bring to the school. Also, I stressed to him, you have to be honest about everything you say." And Victor's reaction to the hire? "Steve is one of the smartest people I've ever met, and he has the know-how and experience to handle the responsibilities. As great as Berklee is, it'll be even better with him there. This is a great opportunity for both parties."

WARWICK AMPLIFICATION

designed by Jonas Hellborg

„For me this is part of my musicianship. Everybody who plays is involved with maintaing their instruments at least on some level. It can be as little as wiping it clean or tuning it. To me it goes to extremes since I am concerned about every active part that helps produce my sound. The more I understand the better I can use what I have. If there is somewhere I can make an improvement I will."

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Fuss On The Bass

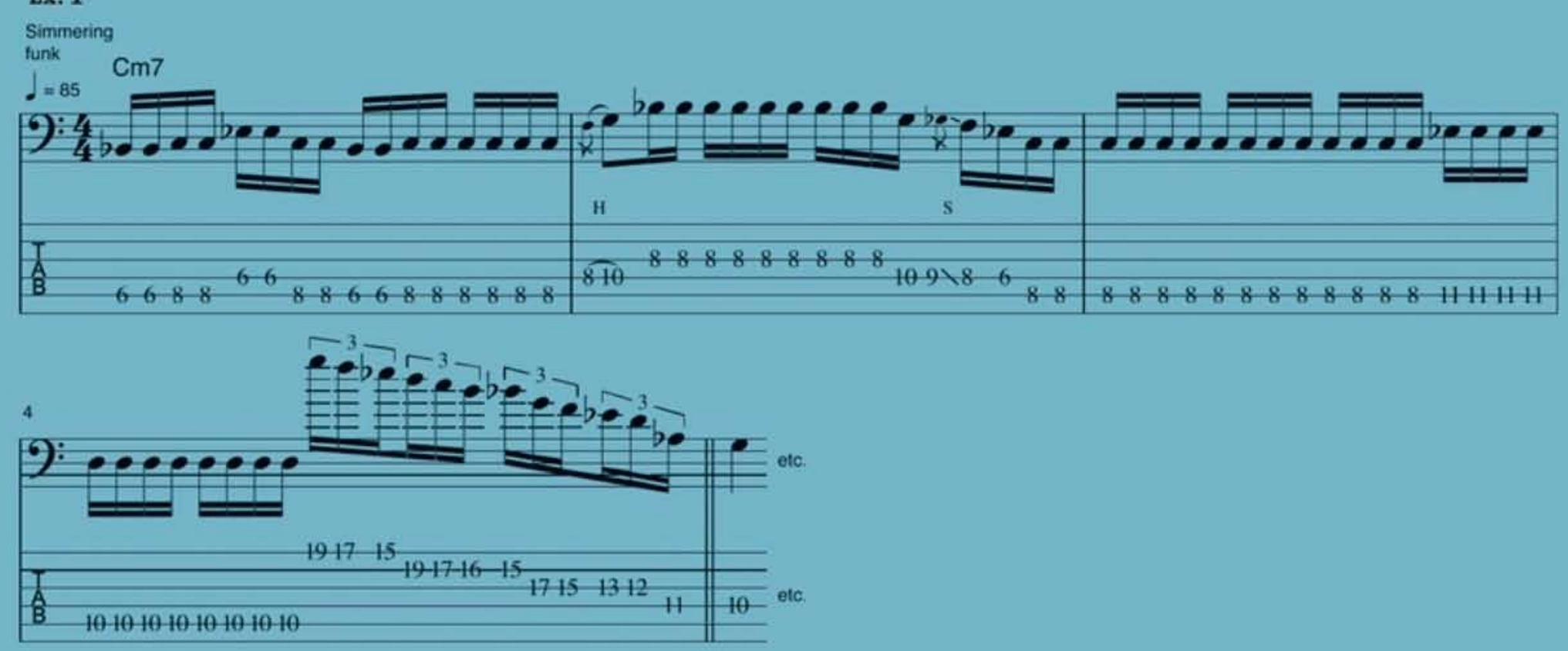
From the bus to the stage to the classroom, anywhere you find Steve Bailey, a heapin' helpin' of heavy bottom is sure to be happening. **Example 1** captures the main four-bar groove of the theme song for Warwick's latest promotional DVD, *Fuss on the Buss 2*, at the 2:25 mark. Lay back on Steve's loping line (which is doubled by Bootsy Collins and T.M. Stevens) until his killer descending fill in bar 4. Says Steve, "That line was a melody Bootsy had; I gave it a 16th pulse, and he loved it. As for the fill, I was just aiming to land on the *G*, with *C* harmonic minor sort of in mind."

Example 2 occurs later on the DVD, during Steve's jam with Robert Trujillo and P-Nut. While the rockers pound out an *E* pedal at 18:51, Steve first finishes a previously established pattern that alternates a fast, repeated lick followed by a whole-note (bars 1 and 2), and then improvises a chord melody (bars 3–10). He says, "Using a 1–2–4 left-hand fingering in the first measure is the way to go. After that, I was just spontaneously improvising chordal ideas."

Moving to Victor Wooten's upcoming CD, *Sword and Stone*, in **Ex. 3** Steve offers a peek at the opening, 4ths-fueled lick of "Brooklyn," which he doubles with Victor Wooten and later harmonizes by playing a 5th higher. He

SIDEBAR CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

Ex. 1



Ex. 2

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college. It would be a program you audition for that will require an even higher level of dedication, but I believe there are a few with a passion for both instruments who will be up for the challenge.

There are some other new faces in the department, including John Patitucci and Victor Bailey. How do they fit in?

The most fun I've had so far was calling up Victor, whom I've known since the early '80s, and asking him to do the New York shuffle and come up a couple of days a week, like Lincoln Goines does. John, who is part of Berklee's Global Jazz Institute, will be spending a good deal of time in the Bass Department. He and Victor have so much positive energy and great ideas! Both of them will teach large and small classes and give private lessons. As for myself, I'll be too busy learning the system at Berklee to give private lessons the first semester, but I've got other concepts in mind. One is called "chat with the chair," in which I get together with all of the bass students at least once per month and feature master classes from my faculty and me, along with surprise Skype guests and multi-bass extravaganzas. Not to ruin the surprise, but Vic [Wooten], Robert Trujillo, Jonas Hellborg, and Lee Sklar are among those who are into it and may even make live appearances. I'm also excited about working on an alliance between Berklee and the Victor Wooten Center for Music & Nature next year.

Let's look back for a moment: How do you reflect upon your time in New York and Los Angeles?

New York for me was baptism by fire—straight out of North Texas to a gig with Paquito D'Rivera and then Dizzy Gillespie. It still freaks me out to think of being 22 and living the jazz dream from my pad in Brooklyn, doing an equal number of gigs on upright and electric. But growing up surfing in the warm south soon led to my migration to L.A. There, I shifted gears, primarily playing electric bass with the Rippingtons, T. Lavitz, David Benoit, Larry Carlton, and Jethro Tull. I got to play all kinds of music around the clock; I can remember going from ghosting on a heavy metal session in ripped jeans to a big band gig with Jake Hanna, changing into a suit while I drove up the 101! The other key in L.A. was joining the faculty at B.I.T. about a year after I arrived. I was amazed to meet my heroes, like Jeff Berlin, Bob Magnusson, Gary Willis, and Richard Maloof, whom I'd grown up watching play upright, electric, and tuba on TV with Lawrence Welk! It was quite a challenge, having high-level student after student; they'd come from a lesson with Berlin or Willis with a look that said, Okay, what have *you* got? All of my method books came from my B.I.T. curriculum, and I'm proud to say a number of my students became top L.A. bassists, like Alex Al, Lance Morrison, and Ernest Tibbs.

At what point did you decide to commit to the fretless 6-string as your vehicle of expression?

Really, it started when I backed over my fretted bass with my car, at 18! I had heard Jaco, but this was simply about the fretless being the only other bass I owned; I played it poorly and had to get good on it, fast. Gradually, I began to realize it was my voice, and I saw that aside from Jaco and Percy Jones, not many others were playing it full time. I convinced Lariveé to make me a fretless 5 and then a fretless 6; I remember getting it for the

Ex. 3

MUSIC CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

laughs, "Get **Ex. 4** together and this will be easy!"

Indeed, Ex. 4—fresh from Bailey's Berklee desk and an exclusive for BP readers—contains a lick Bailey composed as a fingering exercise that will be given to all students who enter his office. "When the student comes back with their fingerings, it will enable me to evaluate what they know about efficient fingering and shifting, so I can create a plan to improve or maximize their approach. We'll also compare and contrast the fingerings students come up with." The only given instruction is to play the first eight *C*'s in bar 3 in groups of two on the *G*, *D*, *A*, and *E* strings. Send your fingerings to BP and we'll get them to Steve!

Ex. 4

Xtremely Badass

Nikki Sixx rocks hard, plays loud, and doesn't have the time or inclination to deal with anything less than awesome. That's why he chooses Dean Markley HELIX strings. With tighter and closer wraps, HELIX guitar and bass strings have more mass than the norm. The result? Amazing sustain and badass, full-bodied tone. As Nikki says, "Dean Markley puts the bite back in the bass sound."

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1988 NAMM show and running up to John Patitucci to show him; he laughed, noticing the lack of frets, and said, "You're crazy!" I never made the conscious decision that the 6 was my voice. It just *was*, and playing it in tune has become a lifelong quest.

More than "in tune," I try to teach intonation control, because playing the fretless effectively involves playing in *and* out of tune, so it's more about controlling the pitch rather than always playing pitch-perfect. Otherwise, why play fretless if you're not going to take advantage of slides, vibrato, and all the nuances the instrument offers? It's to the point now where as much as I love my old Fenders, I'm more comfortable on the 6 than on any fretted bass. Combining the attributes of the 6 with the artificial harmonics I use, as I did on my last CD [*So Low ... Solo*], is something I'm proud of, and I'll continue to pursue my art.

Your involvement with Warwick has been fruitful both on the gear and the musical side.

Make no mistake, I loved my Fender signature 6; it's an historical instrument, and they did a great job. But Warwick immediately felt like a family when I first hung with them at a NAMM show and got to know [company president] Hans-Peter Wilfer. They built a beautiful prototype for me in just three weeks, and the signature model is amazing. Beyond that, Hans loves ideas from artists; he'd ask me about slogans for live events and send me ad copy for my input. I also got to work closely with another of my heroes, Jonas Hellborg. So when Hans announced the photo shoot under the Brooklyn Bridge that became *Fuss on the Buss*, I said let me bring a computer and audio interface on the bus, and let's hire a videographer and see what we get. I brought home the audio and video of all the great bassists playing and talking, and I started editing and putting the music together. Then I e-mailed Bootsy to help me with the theme song, and he was way into it. So that led to last year's *Fuss on the Buss 2* under the Golden Gate Bridge, for which I brought a multi-channel interface which allowed me to record several bassists at once. Now I'm about to leave for Warwick's 30th Anniversary celebration in Germany, where we'll also do *Fuss 3*.

What insight have you gained from leading and performing with multiple bassists via Bass Extremes, your Warwick projects, and five years of fronting the Bass Player LIVE! all-star jam?

I've learned that the camaraderie of bass players at all levels is incredible, and that's what allows these projects to become successful musical situations

INFO

EQUIP

Basses Fretless and fretted Warwick Steve Bailey Artist Series 6-strings; fretless and fretted Alien 6-string acoustic bass guitars; '57 P-Bass; 110-year-old Juzek ¾-size upright

(with Realist SoundClip, Underwood pickup, and German graphite bow); Warwick Triumph E-Upright (4-string)

Strings D'Addario ESP170-6 XL Pro-Steels (.030, .045, .065, .080, .100, .130)

Amps Warwick Hellborg Preamp, Hellborg Stereo Power Amp, Hellborg Hi Cab, Hellborg Low Cab

Effects TC Electronic Nova System; Source Audio Soundblox 2 Dimension Reverb; Source Audio Soundblox Bass Envelope Filter

Other Planet Waves NS Mini Headstock Tuner; Peterson iStrobo-Soft iPhone app

Recording A Designs REDDI All-Tube Direct Box; Radial Firefly Tube Preamp

SIX FROM STEVE

So Low ... Solo [BATB]; Evolution [JVC]; Dichotomy [JVC]; (with Bass Extremes on Tone Center) Just Add Water; Cookbook; (with Victor Wooten) Soul Circus [Vanguard]

CONNECT

Check out Steve's website.
www.stevebaileybass.com
Watch some clips from Steve's Fuss on the Buss projects.

more often than not. We all love to hang and play, and that's a great combination. It's amazing because there's rarely more than one bass player on a typical gig, and we're used to playing pretty much the whole time. It's unnatural for eight bassists to play together—but at the BP LIVE! jam everyone is willing to listen, and when I motion for someone to lay out and they hear the texture change, they understand. Ultimately I think that's why it works, because bass players are such good listeners. They're aware of everything going on around them. Therein lies the key to my dubious talent for getting a bunch of elephants to dance together!

How would you describe Victor Wooten's two new CDs, *Sword and Stone* and *Words and Tones*, and what's your role on them?

The music is unlike anything I've ever heard come from Vic, and I got to see it from the inside, through my role in pre- and post-production, mixing, playing electric and upright, playing trombone and multitracking and writing horn parts, and playing keyboards. At times it seemed chaotic, with so many things getting done simultaneously—but as usual, Vic had a clear picture in his mind of how everything worked and sounded together.

For a while, Vic has had this idea of people playing instruments that are not their main axes. He knew I'd played trombone and said he'd put it on the CD if I could get my chops up. I took the bait, borrowed a bone, and began practicing daily. I felt like a beginner again, which was so exciting because every day you play, you sound better! What's cool is, even though Vic's concept is an instrumental and a vocal CD of mostly the same music, the two are built differently from the ground up. They stand on their own, with different song lengths, arrangements, textures, even melodies. Oh, and Vic takes, hands down, his sickest solo to date on the title track of *Sword and Stone*!

Having a firm grasp on both the performance and "edu" sides of music, what's your forecast for the future of bass?

I think it will keep evolving, as bassists continue to develop through music schools and professional playing situations. The bass guitar in particular has had so much growth for such a young instrument; the amount of innovation and experimentation has been incredible, and I see no reason for it to stop. My ultimate goal at Berklee is to be a "player" in facilitating that evolution. Bass departments all over the country are pushing the envelope; I'm excited to be among that movement as part of the biggest game in town. **BP**

GRIT DIRT FUZZ CHUNK OVERDRIVE FUN...

Effects go by many names and come in many flavors. We know that putting a guitar stompbox in a different colored case does not a bass pedal make. Bass players deserve pedals specifically designed for their frequency spectrum. Vintage pedals have their place, but finding that sweet spot isn't always so easy. You have to deal with noise, signal loss, and tones that can change with battery life or when things heat up on stage. Some of those old Germanium-powered effects are more sensitive than a train-car full of nitro.

Tech 21's circuitry unifies righteous, vintage tones with modern dependability. Utilizing the best components, each unit delivers a wealth of hot driven, usable tones.

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The Bass Boost Chorus gives bass players something they have long deserved: a chorus that actually works. On bass. This pedal has been optimized to avoid the 'motion sickness' side-effects of traditional chorus effects. A key aspect of this design is the Detune control, which adjusts the pitch of the choral voices to create deep and lush chorus before you dial in any modulation. Put some sweet on your low with the Bass Boost Chorus.

RED RIPPER

If you think bass stompboxes don't have anything new to offer, you're in a for a nasty surprise with the Red Ripper. This wickedly dynamic effect gets meaner the harder you play, shifting from enhanced lower harmonics to buzz-saw, higher harmonic distortions. In addition to an active 3-band EQ and adjustable Drive and Level, the sinister R.I.P. control drives your tone from vintage fuzz to monolithic distortion and beyond, into Brassmaster-style octave fuzz and Moogie-style synth tones. Bloody amazing.

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BASS BOOST FUZZ

When you want a huge, 360-degree, room-filling bass tone, step up to the Bass Boost Fuzz. Paying homage to the fat, gritty sounds of '60s fuzz bass, this pedal will put some musical rage in your low-end. When you need more focus and edge, dial in the +CLEAN control to add just the right amount of direct tone to your mix. And when you want it louder, the independent Boost control kicks in up to 21dB of additional, unadulterated volume.

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KILL
DEVIL
HILL

GUT CHECK

Rex Brown Goes Deeper With Kill Devil Hill

BY FREDDY VILLANO | PHOTO BY SANDI MURPHY

REX BROWN WAS RAISED in what he calls "a small peanut town" in Texas where his grandmother played piano for silent movies, his parents listened to Tommy Dorsey and swing bands, and his sister turned him onto the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Rex has spent his career decimating audiences in such bands as Pantera and Down, where he draws on a varied musical background to infuse his lines with a musical depth often overlooked in metal. His band Kill Devil Hill provides the latest evidence of his musical dexterity.

Is it true you were offered a jazz bass scholarship to North Texas State University?

Yeah, they checked me out while I was I playing in the jazz lab at James Bowie High School in Arlington, Texas. They're one of the major jazz bands; they would often play the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. I was going to do that, but I discovered Led Zeppelin instead.

In Pantera, you were known for incorporating walking bass lines behind Dimebag Darrell's guitar solos. Does that come from the jazz background?

Maybe that had something to do with it, but I try not to analyze it. It's more about whatever comes from the gut, and whatever I'm feeling the song needs. It's about working around the vocals, knowing when not to play.

Your tone on the Kill Devil Hill record is a powerful blend of bottom end and distortion. What's your secret?

I turned the SVT 8x10 cabs on their ass [sideways], miked them up, and tried to get as clean a sound as I could. Then I used a solid-state Ampeg and distorted the shit out of it in an isolation booth. But a lot of it really has to do with my right hand and my basses.

How so?

I'm predominantly a pick player; you get more attack with a pick. The Spector Euro4LX I'm using has alder wings and a mahogany neck, so it's relatively light. That gives serious midrange punch and growl. I also sink the pickups as low as they can go into the body of the bass so I get more of the wood sound. But now I'm telling my secrets.

What's your advice for up-and-coming bass players?

Find a good drummer—somebody you can lock in with and be in the pocket. That's all there is to it. If you can't find a good drummer you're wasting your time. And play solid and listen to old Motown or John Paul Jones. For me, that's it. **BP**

INFO

LISTEN

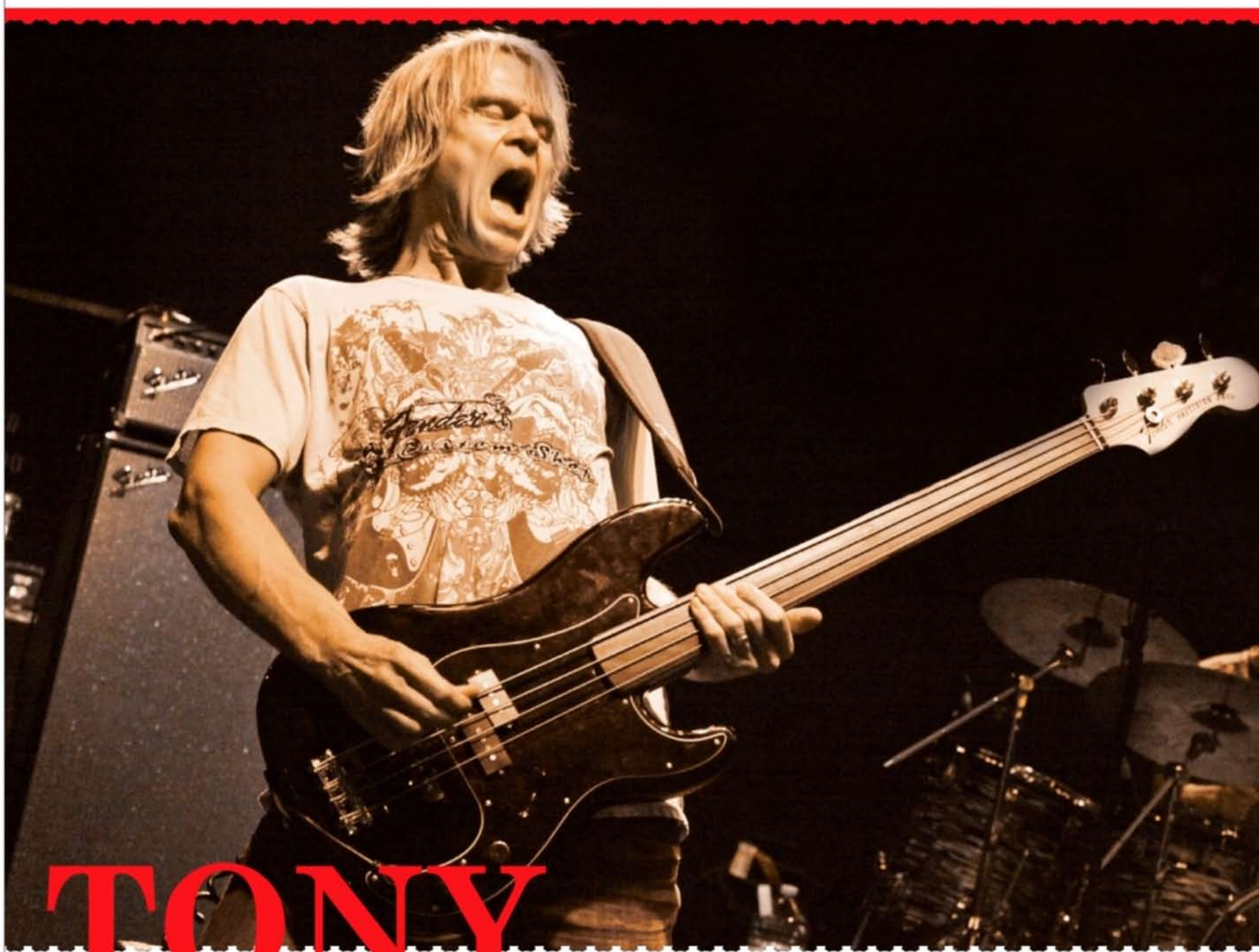
Kill Devil Hill, *Kill Devil Hill* [SPV/Steamhammer, 2012]

EQUIP

Basses Spector Euro4LX, Spector Rex Brown Signature, Spector RXT
Rig Ampeg SVT-4PRO heads, Ampeg 8x10 cabinets
Strings DR Strings Hi-Beams (.045–.105)
Picks Dunlop Tortex 1mm triangular picks
Effects Boss CH-1 Super Chorus, Morley PBA-2 Dual Bass Wah, MXR Phase 90, MXR M-80 Bass DI+

CONNECT

Check out KDH's official video for "Strange." bassplayer.com/holiday2012



TONY FRANKLIN

Kenny Wayne Shepherd's Fretless Monster

BY FREDDY VILLANO

TONY FRANKLIN HAS BEEN A CHAMPION OF the fretless bass in rock & roll ever since his tasty harmonics and solid groove set the tone for the Firm's 1985 hit single "Radioactive." Tony went on to elevate the instrument's profile in hard rock and heavy metal via another '80s supergroup, Blue

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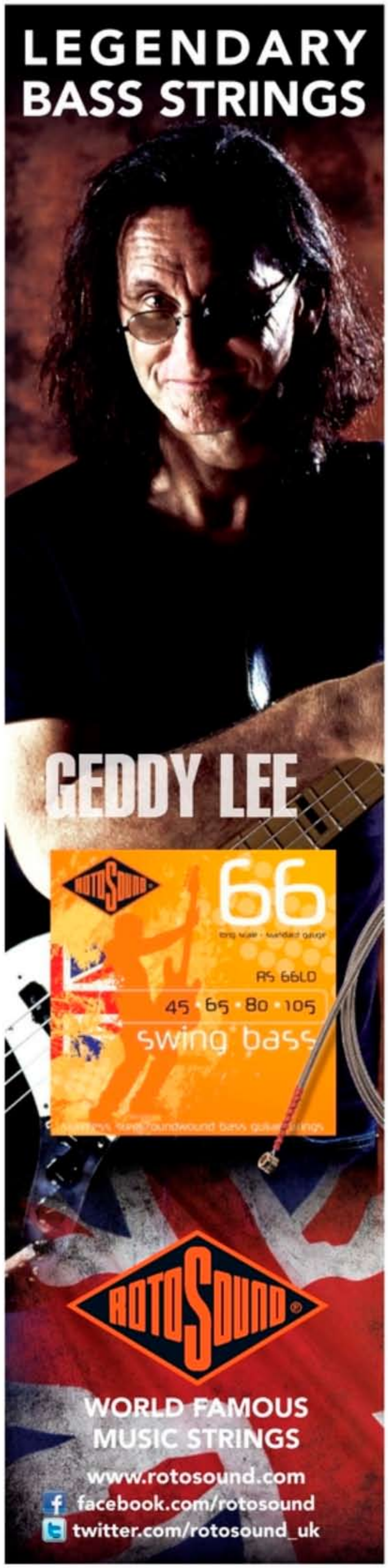


Murder. Since then he has performed with a dizzying array of artists, including David Gilmour, Kate Bush, Donna Lewis, and Quiet Riot, and anchored more than 150 albums with his signature sound. He also released a double-disc, 24-bit collection of bass loops called *Not Just Another Pretty Bass* [Sony Creative Software]. Franklin recently left an eight-year career in artist relations at Fender to hit the road with blues guitarist Kenny Wayne Shepherd.

What advice do you have for developing solid intonation on the fretless?

I highly recommend playing an unlined fretless. Remember, the lines are not perfectly in tune; they are just guides. Practice with some kind of tuning reference, like a keyboard or jam-along tracks. Get to know your instrument. And just put in the time and the practice. Play with conviction and confidence. It took me a couple of years before it started to click. There are no shortcuts.

How do you manage to cut through when you're competing with loud, often distorted, guitars?

INFO

LISTEN

Tony Franklin, *Wonderland* [JVC, 2003]

EQUIP

Bass Fender Tony Franklin Fretless Precision Bass
Rig Fender Super Bassman amp, Fender Bassman 810 Neo cabinets
Strings DR Strings Sunbeams (.045–.105)
Picks Fender Tony Franklin Delrin-style, 351 shape, heavy gauge
Other Fender Custom Shop Performance Series Cables, Line 6 Relay G90 wireless

Every situation is different, but I've never had a problem getting the fretless to cut through. Fretted or fretless, the bass still has its own specific frequency range. A passive Fender, in my opinion, has the ideal frequencies to cut through in any band situation. Often other instruments can overlap with the bass guitar's frequency range, which can make the overall sound muddy or cluttered.

Many people assume that Jimmy Page used a lot of distortion in the Firm, but most of the time he didn't. Great players know how to make everyone sound good—not just themselves! At the end of the day, it's the entire band's responsibility to make sure everyone gets heard.

How did you land the Kenny Wayne Shepherd gig?

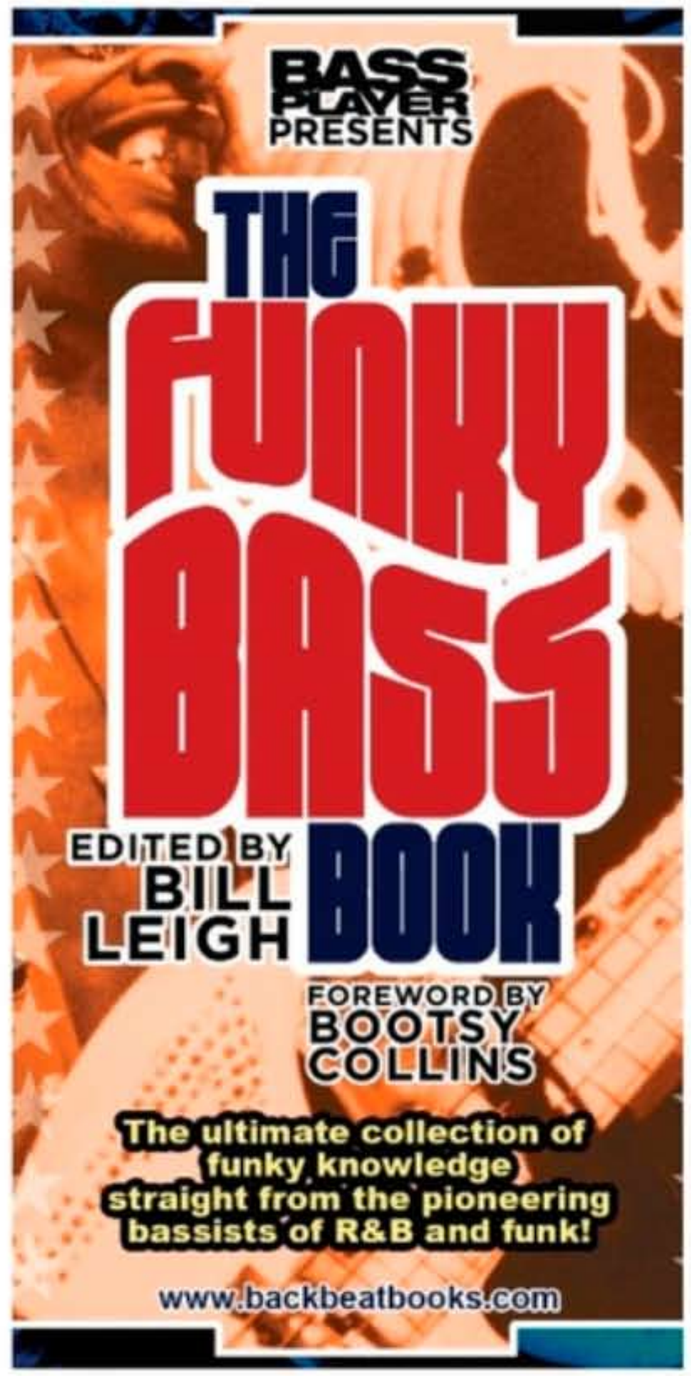
Kenny and I had met a few times over the years. I started filling in for his bass player [Scott Nelson] every now and then when he had other commitments. When Scott moved on from the band, Kenny's management called to see if I could recommend anyone to take his spot. I said, "Yes, me!" It was a pretty seamless transition. But, like any new situation, you put in the time to learn and absorb the material, as well the dynamics and the overall chemistry of the band.

Shepherd's drummer, Chris Layton, is known as a master of the Texas shuffle. Were you familiar with that type of groove?

I was familiar with it, but there's a big difference between "being familiar" and "owning it." I don't claim to own it yet, but I'm a good student. Often the bass needs to lay off the "and" of the shuffle, especially if the guitar is, too. Otherwise it can sound cluttered or messy.

Having worked in artist relations, you've been on both sides of the spotlight. Is there anything you learned in that capacity that has helped you as a musician?

Working at Fender was an amazing experience on so many levels. Amongst other things, I truly appreciate the time, energy, and commitment it takes to support an endorsed artist. When a company delivers a piece of equipment to a venue or a video shoot or a TV appearance, there's a whole network of people, relationships, companies, and equipment involved in making that happen. It's easy to take it for granted. It has made me a better and more appreciative artist. The artist–company relationship is a two-way street. Content is king these days—quotes, pictures, videos, etc. And just being a good guy to work with, that's what I would look for in artists when I was in artist relations. And now that's what I try to be and do as an artist myself. **BP**



SOUNDROOM

Kala
S-U-B U-Bass

BY BRIAN FOX

ONCE VIEWED BY MAINLAND MORONS AS THE KAZOO of stringed instruments—more toy than tool for meaningful musical expression—the ukulele has experienced a welcome renaissance in the last decade, with players such as Jake Shimabukuro showing the world why the ukulele is the most beautiful Hawaiian invention since shave ice. For the past few years, Kala Brand Music has been bringing the mighty uke to the bass world, first with its fretted and fretless acoustic U-Bass models, and then with its California Series Solid Body bass. We've been lucky enough to test drive all incarnations of the U-Bass as they've emerged. This month we check out Kala's S-U-B U-Bass, an import version of its Amercan-made California U-Bass.

Visually and sonically, it's difficult to distinguish the S-U-B from its American counterpart. The sunburst finish is flawless, and the bass shares the same slick pickup/preamp system as the California: under-saddle Shadow piezoelectric pickups paired with a Mi-Si Align preamp. After a 60-second charge via the preamp's proprietary adapter, the bass is good

to go for eight hours. The S-U-B has the signature U-Bass woof—with amp and onboard EQ set flat (approximately, as the knobs lack center detents), the U-Bass has massive low end.

As with all the U-Basses we've played, it takes some adjustment to get used to the unique feel of the polyurethane strings, let alone the short 21" scale. If you're looking for snappy high end or profound midrange punch, you'll have a hard time finding it with the U-Bass. The S-U-B responded well to both fingerstyle and pickstyle playing. Due to the strings' pliability—and their tendency to roll under my fingers—I found my timing was tightest when I played with a pick. The strings have a nasty tendency to go flat after a bit of playing. They began to stabilize after continued play, but still required re-tuning every few minutes. (Clipping a tiny tuner to the Kala's headstock made the job a little less burdensome.)

Given that the S-U-B differed very little from its U.S.A.-made partner and that it comes it at roughly half the price, it's hard to find fault with the latest U-Bass. With its upright-like bottom end, the S-U-B is a natural choice for players looking for a unique voice in a mellow, singer-songwriter type situation. But by no means is it limited to that; once I adjusted my technique a bit, I actually spent most of my time on the Kala copping the grooves of funky pickers and pluckers like Carol Kaye and Fred Thomas. Naturally, the Kala's small size is another asset; I had no problems flying with it as carry-on baggage, and it was easy to sling over my shoulder as a secondary bass on gigs. For its small size, massive bottom, value, and pricelessness as a conversation piece, Kala's S-U-B U-Bass earns a BASS PLAYER Editor Award. **BP**

SPECIFICATIONS

KALA S-U-B U-BASS

Street $450
Bottom Line Huge booty, portability, low price, massive fun factor—what's not to love?

Contact ubass.com

SPECIFICATIONS

Body Poplar
Neck Maple
Fingerboard Rosewood
Nut Rosewood
Strings Road Toad Music polyurethane
Pickup Shadow under-saddle piezo
Electronics Mi-Si Align
Controls Volume, bass, treble
Tuners Custom Hipshot
Scale length 21"
Neck width 1"
Weight 4 lbs
Gig bag Included
Made in China
Warranty Lifetime limited

HAO Bass Liner

BY BRIAN FOX

THE FOLKS AT GODLYKE KNOW HOW TO PICK 'EM; AS THE U.S. distributors for such effects companies as Chunk Systems, Guyatone, Maxon, Emma, and more, they are a one-stop shop for hip boutique stompboxes. This month, we were invited to check out their latest pedal, the HAO Bass Liner, a hi-fi bass preamp co-designed by audio guru (and bass player) Phil Jones. The Bass Liner is designed for ultimate transparency and maximum tone control, with 18dB boost/cut at five critical frequencies for electric bass. If far-out, wacky effects are what you seek in a stompbox, move along. But if you're looking to pack all the EQ power of a fancy rack system into a pocket-sized box, you'll want to take notice of the Bass Liner.

In terms of elegant design, the Bass Liner has it nailed—from a fabulous blue-green finish to high-quality pots, sturdy switches, and nubby knobs, the Bass Liner is all class. Inside, the circuitry is expertly mounted. To test the Bass Liner, I plugged in both active and passive basses and run through a range of amps, from modest combos to high-tech heads.

With an active bass in passive mode, the Bass Liner's clip indicator lit up when I pushed the INPUT GAIN beyond 3 (on a scale of 10). Overloading the input made the bass sound a little squished and overdriven, but it's clear that's not the goal here. (If you're looking for sweet overdrive sound, you could do worse than HAO's Rust Ride. Just saying.) Finding a pedal setting where there was more or less unity gain when I switched the pedal on and off, I was able to get a sense of the EQ itself.

The Bass Liner is voiced in such a way that frequency boosts and cuts felt smooth and subtle. Plugging in a passive Jazz Bass and soloing the bridge pickup, cutting a few dBs at 630Hz quickly attenuated the J-Bass's midrange honk that too often gets on my nerves.

There's a lot to love about the Bass Liner. Soundwise, it's spot-on, allowing players to make subtle tone tweaks to dial in the sound they desire. I found two elements of the pedals output section somewhat puzzling, though. First, given how fab the pedal sounds, I would love to send a direct signal to the front of house or to a DAW. But there is no XLR out on the Bass Liner. Second, the output labeling is a little wonky; the MUTE function only works through the OUTPUT jack, as the signal runs through the DIRECT jack whether or not the mute is engaged.

Semantics aside, the HAO Bass Liner sounds superb. If transparency and ultimate control over your EQ curve are what you're after, your search just might end here. **BP**

SPECIFICATIONS

HAO BASS LINER

Street $300
Bottom line Who knew EQ could be so sexy?

Contact godlyke.com

SPECIFICATIONS

Controls LEVEL, INPUT GAIN, 318dB @ 50Hz, 160Hz, 630Hz, 2.5kHZ, and 12kHz
Switches On/off, MUTE
Jacks INPUT, OUTPUT, DIRECT
Power 9V battery, 9–18V DC
Frequency response 10Hz–120kHz
Input impedance >20kΩ
Output impedance >30kΩ
Made in China

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Zoom B3

Bass Effects & Amp Simulator

BY E. E. BRADMAN

OVER THE YEARS, ZOOM HAS BUILT A SOLID reputation for building distinctive-looking compact multi-effect units that sound good while being easy on the wallet. Its bass offerings in the last decade or so—the 3000B, the 500 series (which included the 505, 505II, 506, and 506II), the 607, and the BFX-708 and 708II—have all been affordable alternatives to boutique single-effect pedals, and small enough to throw into a gig-bag pocket.

In price, size, and features, the B3 is situated somewhere between Zoom's cute little B1x, released a couple years ago, and the B91ut, a four-year-old and much larger multi-effect. Compared to its big brother, the B3 has 100 user presets instead of 80, no 12AX7 tube, a 44.1kHz sampling frequency instead of 96kHz, and no expression pedal. Besides the things we expect from most effect units in 2012—a tuner, effects, amp and cab simulations, a USB interface, battery/adaptor options, and a balanced XLR output with a pre/post switch—the B3 runs on USB power and packs a looper and a drum machine, too.

JUMPIN' RIGHT IN

The interface is well designed and easy to navigate. Each patch comprises three virtual pedals, each visible in one of the three LCD displays. Going through the patches one by one is as easy as pressing footswitches 2 (down) or 3 (up); you can jump up or down a bank by simultaneously stomping on pedals 2 and 3 or 1 and 2. I started by choosing a patch and then holding the first button to get to the "home" screen, which shows all three pedals.

Editing presets is intuitive. Each pedal has a menu page, sometimes more than one screen; editing each preset is as straightforward as using the three knobs underneath each screen. The options are quite plentiful, but when I had trouble getting the sounds I wanted, I simply switched pedals for other ones.

Trying to build the perfect synth bass, for example, I plugged in an active Lodestone Primal Artist 5-string with EMG pickups and started

the Award Winning SB5000

with a synth bass patch consisting of a boost, a monophonic synth, and a fuzz. Eventually, I went with two modified monosynths and a reverse delay, and then I removed the second monosynth from the patch by stomping on its footswitch, which works very well; when I pressed footswitch 1 to return to the "home" screen, in fact, I took the first pedal out of rotation for a second, which momentarily affected the patch. Slightly more inconvenient was the fact that I couldn't hit just one footswitch to get into bypass mode. The only way to go from clean tone to effected tone with one stomp is from tuner mode, but getting back into tuner mode means pressing and holding the second footswitch—which, again, changes the preset momentarily.

DROPPIN' NAMES

The B3's manual is clear and to the point, and its effect list is full of charming, short descriptions with plenty of bold name-dropping. Some of my favorite sounds in the B3 came from custom effect combinations curated by Victor Wooten, Dave Ellefson, and Frank Bello, who each contributed ten effects, and Doug Wimbish, who designed five.

As you might expect, Wooten's presets are geared toward funk and soloing; my favorites included his Q-Tron, a solo-friendly delay/reverb combo, an interesting pitch-shifter with delay, and two "dreamy" sounds with reverse delay and pitch delay. Anthrax bass man Bello threw in some unexpected delights: Besides a distortion/tape echo tribute to Cliff Burton and a great everyday patch, his collection includes sonic nods to the Cure, Journey, Led Zeppelin, and horror movies. Likewise, Dave Ellefson invoked Van Halen with a patch inspired by the bass intro to "You're No Good," cooked up some cool crunch fuzz and synth bass, and threw down a wild vibrato/synth combo I can't imagine him

SPECIFICATIONS

ZOOM B3

STREET $200
BOTTOM LINE Highly flexible multi-effect, creative sketchpad, and recording interface.

CONTACT zoom.co.jp

SPECIFICATIONS

EFFECT TYPES 111
SAMPLING FREQUENCY 44.1kHz
SIGNAL PROCESSING 32-bit floating point
INPUTS Standard mono ¼" jack, with active and passive options
OUTPUTS Standard mono phone jack, XLR, stereo ¼" jack (line/headphones)
POWER 9 volts DC (four AA batteries or USB bus)
DIMENSIONS 6.6" (D) x 9.2" (W) x 2.1 (H)"
WEIGHT 2.6 pounds
MADE IN Japan

Guitar Player & bassplayer

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7. Winner's List: To obtain the name of the prize winner, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to "Winner", GUITAR PLAYER & BASS PLAYER / Source Audio HH3 Giveaway, 1111 Bayhill Drive, Ste. 125, CA 94066., USA, by December 31, 2012.

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Artist Appearances

Verdine White, Lee Sklar, Jack Casady, Stu Hamm, Brian Bromberg, Bakithi Kumalo, Dirk Lance, Evan Brewer, Andrew Gouche, Ready Freddie Washington, Oskar Cartaya, Jimmy Earl, Alex Al, Tim Lefebvre, Mike Elizondo, Gary Grainger, Bernhard Lackner, Sean Hurley, Bubby Lewis, Bunny Brunel, Norm Stockton, Rufus Philpot, Russel Blake, Igor Saaverdra and more

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using in Megadeth. Doug Wimbish contributes two instantly usable standard patches, a sweet Jaco tone, and a couple Living Colour-ready messages from outer space. Other patches pay homage to specific eras of Larry Graham, Verdine White, Stanley Clarke, Marcus Miller, Tim Bogert, and Pino Palladino tone.

As diverse as these patches were, it was great to be able to create something interesting by momentarily taking pedals out of the lineup or switching them out for other pedals. Some of the patches consist of two effects and one of the 12 amp models, each with its own cab-mod options. You can only use one amp model at a time, but the good news is that you can store and rename up to 100 of your own creations.

GIMME A BEAT!

As fun as the B3's effects and simulations may be, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the unit's drum machine, looper, and USB options. Initially, I found the 36 pop, dance, rock, metal, odd-time, Latin, and thrash rhythms a bit stiff, but when I thought of them as fancy metronomes and settled into working on various feels and exercises, I grew to enjoy them for what they are. (There are also five straightforward metronomes.)

The B3's drum machine automatically links to the looper, which allows you to lay down loops up to 40 seconds long. You can access the rhythm and tap-tempo functions by hitting the small buttons near the top of the unit's face, but if you plan to use the B3's loop and rhythm functions onstage, two accessories might make things a lot easier: The FP02 expression pedal helps you control effect parameters in real time, and the FS01 allows you to tap the tempo for the drum machine, looper, and time-based effects.

Without the FS01and FP02, the B3 is fine for gigs but better for tabletop production. The LCDs are easy to see onstage and the unit seems tough enough, but the buttons are too small and the power cable quite short.

Zoom says the B3 gets six hours from four AA batteries; I'd change 'em before each gig. If you're recording, though, the B3 comes with an LE version of Steinberg's Sequel recording software; you can also use the B3 as a recording interface for the DAW of your choice. And thanks to its USB connection, firmware updates are easy.

In essence, the B3 is a multifaceted box that excels as a practice tool, recording interface, creative sketchpad, and yes, a flexible effects pedal. It's compact enough to pull out in the back seat of the tour van, but sturdy enough to withstand being stomped on in the heat of the moment. The fact that it's impossible to bypass the unit with a single step is the one handicap that's hard to ignore, but for some players, that may be mitigated by the B3's compact size and wide palette of options. **BP**

TECHBENCH

EXCERPT

The Studio Builder's Handbook

How to Improve the Sound of your Studio on any Budget

BY BOBBY OWSINSKI & DENNIS MOODY

BEFORE WE START BUILDING, IT'S IMPORTANT to go over a few basic principles of acoustics. The science of acoustics is extremely complex, but there's also somewhat of a black art component to it as well. Even very well-trained designers occasionally come up with rooms that look right on paper but don't sound the way they're supposed to, so there's no exact formula for room design that works every time regardless of your level of knowledge.

That being said, if you break it down, there are only two things that you want from any music room, be it a rehearsal space, control room, tracking room, or home playback area: isolation from the outside world (soundproofing) and control of the reflections and reverb time (acoustic control). These are completely different issues, so let's look at them separately.

SOUNDPROOFING: WHAT WON'T WORK

When it comes to soundproofing, there are some very basic principles that just about anyone can understand that will get you 90 percent of the way there. The problem is that every extra percent of isolation that you wring out of your space from that point costs exponentially more money.

Before we look at some accepted way to improve your isolation, let's look at all the things that won't work. The following are various materials that you'll often see attached to the walls of a space in hopes of increasing the isolation.

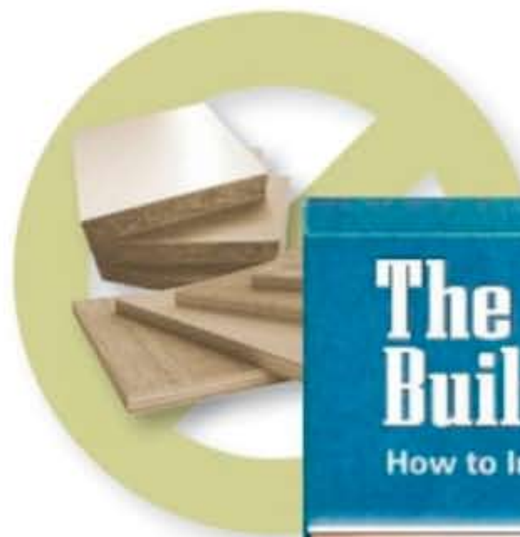
Mattresses There are so many things wrong with this that it's hard to know where to start. Sure, a mattress is made up of a lot of soft material, but it's not the right kind for sound absorption, won't affect the low frequencies at all (which are what causes most of the isolation problems), accumulates mold and moisture, and makes a nice home for rodents and other unwanted critters. Plus, it's pretty difficult to get enough of them to cover a room, and they take up so much space for so little benefit in return.

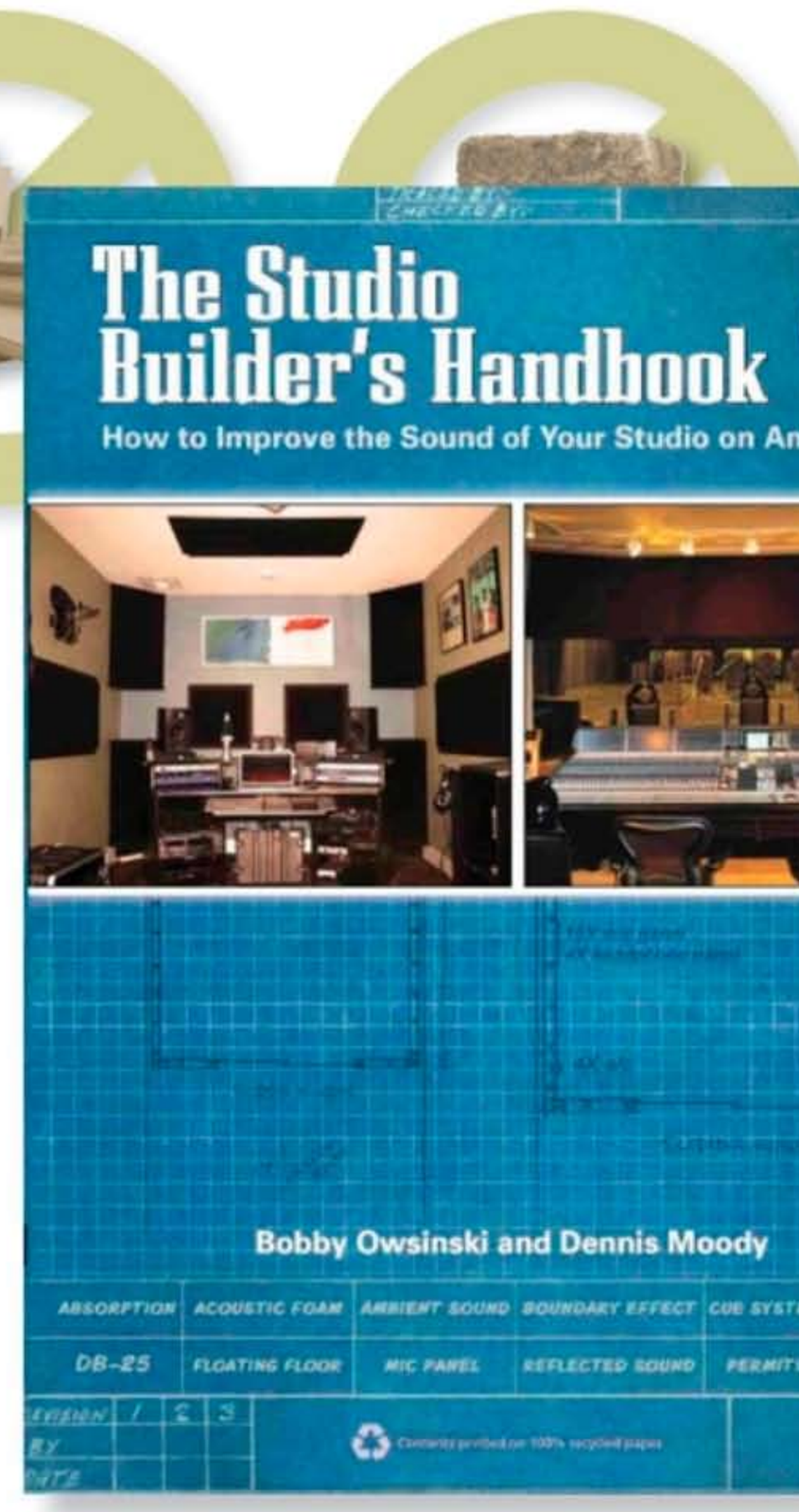
Egg crates Egg crates are light, porous cardboard and do absolutely nothing for soundproofing. They can act as a sound diffuser at higher frequencies, but the bandwidth is so limited that they're virtually useless there as well. Plus, they're highly flammable! It's difficult to find enough of them to cover a room, but frankly, even using one is too many.

Carpet Carpet attached to the wall is another product that will affect the sound of the room yet do nothing in the way of soundproofing, since it doesn't affect the low frequencies, which are the ones that you've got to control for good isolation. Carpet has exactly the same problem as mattresses in that it will begin to smell over time. Old or new carpet makes no difference, except that older carpet will smell more.

Foam rubber Foam rubber does have some acoustical absorption properties, but once again will do very little for the low frequencies that will cause all of your problems with the neighbors. It can be as expensive as materials with real acoustic control properties, degrades over time, and will burn like crazy if given the chance.

Rubber Floor mats, mouse pads, neoprene, or any other variation of rubber will do very little to stop sound coming or going from your room. As you'll see over the course of this





book, rubber can be used to enhance the isolation of floors, walls, ceilings, and even speakers, but by itself doesn't have enough mass to accomplish the task.

Wall cellulose Pumping cellulose insulation into walls can make a slight difference, but it's marginal since there are much more effective ways to improve the isolation that are much cheaper. It can be helpful if used along with some other techniques that we'll soon go over, but isn't particularly effective by itself.

Fiberglass insulation Common fiberglass insulation once again has little ability to stop enough of the low frequencies that bug your neighbors, although, like with blown cellulose, it can be useful in conjunction with other techniques. Just pinning it to the wall won't help, but it will affect the acoustics of the room. It's also a skin and eye irritant, takes up a lot of space, and the dust can be hazardous to your lungs when left exposed. As you'll soon see, there's a much better way to use fiberglass for acoustic control (although it still won't help with isolation much).

Plywood panels It's true that plywood panels provide mass and mass is what's needed to stop sound transmission (especially the low frequencies), but the problem is that wood transfers sound too well, so the construction technique used is crucial. Not only that, if the panels are too thin they'll resonate and vibrate, causing an even bigger problem.

Particle board See plywood panels.

Bales of hay Unless you live out in the country, it's unlikely that hay bales are much of an option, but they actually do work. The problem is that they take up a lot of usable space, make a nice home for critters, and are a major fire hazard. Not recommended!

Acoustical foam Acoustical foam is helpful in controlling the acoustics within a room, but it does nothing to stop sound transmission and is expensive to boot. Acoustical foam doesn't even begin to affect the offending low frequencies, and using too much just makes the room seem dead and uncomfortable. There are much cheaper ways to achieve a better result.

Understand that all of these materials will have at least some effect on the sound of the room, but will do almost nothing by themselves to improve your isolation. **BP**

Learn more home studio do's and don'ts in Owsinski and Moody's book, The Studio Builder's Handbook [Alfred].

WOODSHED

JAZZ CONCEPTS

The Sequence Of Things: Licks, Part 3

BY JOHN GOLDSBY

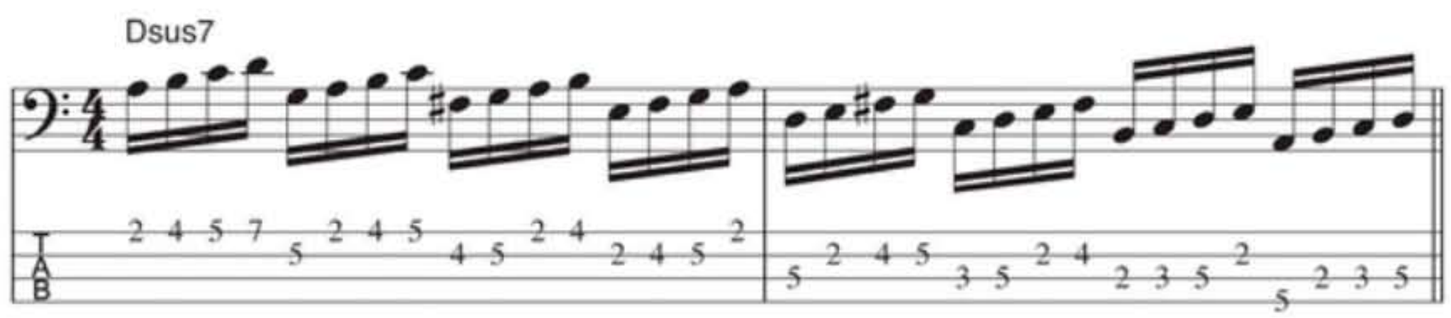
LICKS, PATTERNS, AND MELODIES ARE MEANING-ful only when they are played musically. All that practice-room fodder is good for the chops, but the point of playing the bass is to create real music that people want to hear. It's hard to play an arsenal of licks and patterns and make them sound convincing—like a musical statement—and not just like fingers wiggling.

What's the solution? Musical sequences can unify bass lines and solos. A sequence is a series of similar melodies, intervals, rhythms, or chords played in succession. (Note that this does not refer to the computer sequencers that keep MIDI files in order and keyboard skills quantized.) A sequence is a repeated musical phrase that has a melodic, intervallic, rhythmic, or harmonic relationship to the original phrase.

The music world is full of sequences. Think of the first two bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony: *Ta-ta-ta-daaa. Ta-ta-ta-daaa.* Mr. B wrote the entire first movement based on variations and sequences of the *ta-ta-ta-daaa* theme. Bass method books are also full of sequences, which grind through scales, arpeggios, and rhythms in mind-numbing, finger-busting repetition. These are the push-ups, sit-ups, and squats of bass pedagogy. Here are some ways to use sequences musically, which will help you move past repetitive, lick-based playing.

Examples 1–3 show sequences as they might be written in a bass method book. These patterns or licks are good to practice

EX. 1



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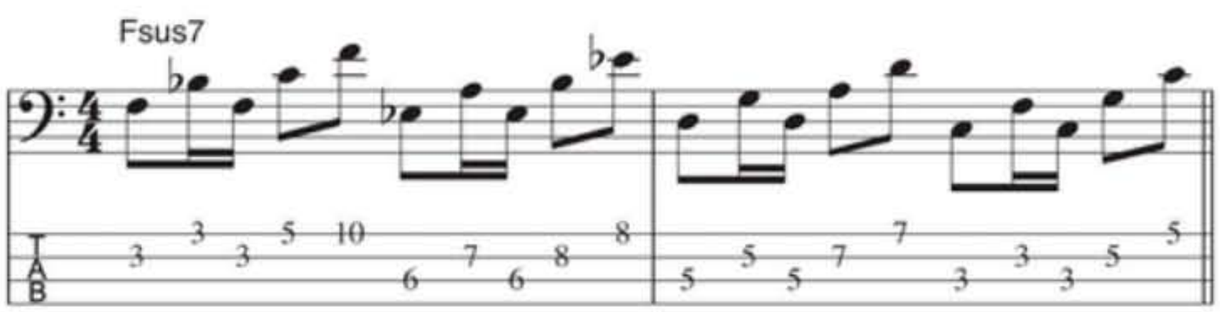


INFO

CONNECT

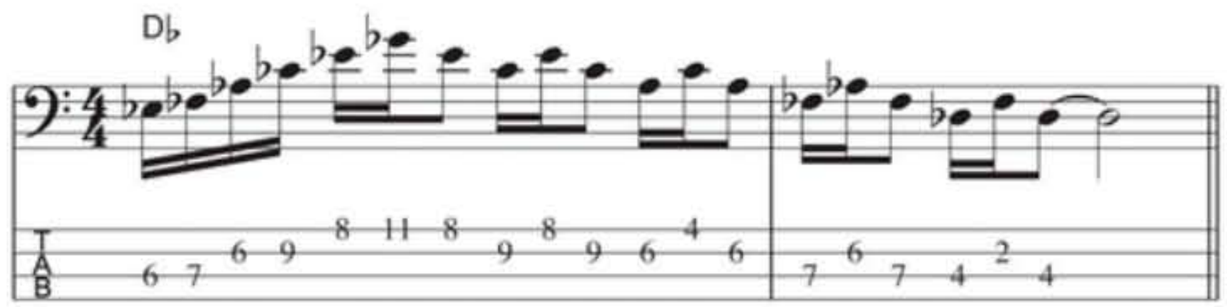
- Learn more about sus chords.
- Check out the sequences in Beethoven's Symphony No. 5.
- Herbie Hancock, Buster Williams, Greg Osby, and Al Foster play a 24-minute version of "Maiden Voyage."

bassplayer.com/holiday2012

JOHN GOLDSBY

Discuss all aspects of bass playing with John at the musicplayer.com LowDown Forum. Also visit John's website for sound files, videos, and bass-related material. **johngoldsby.com**

EX. 3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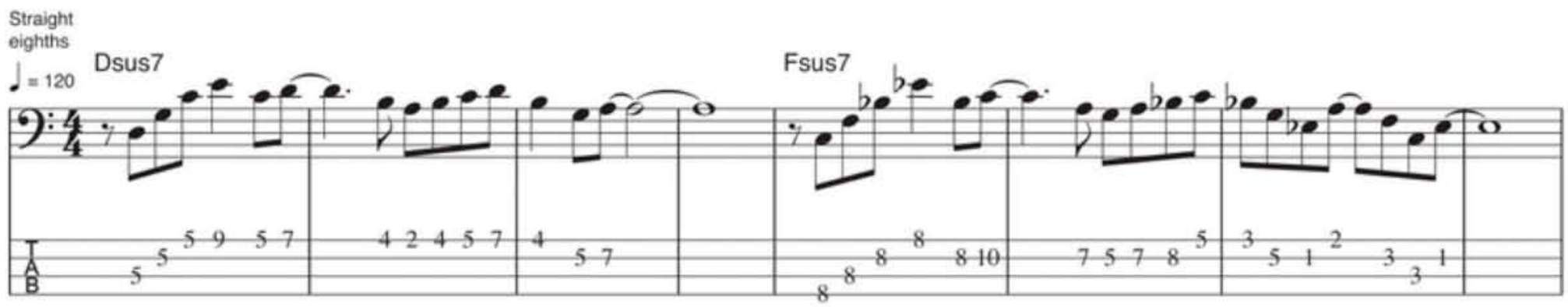
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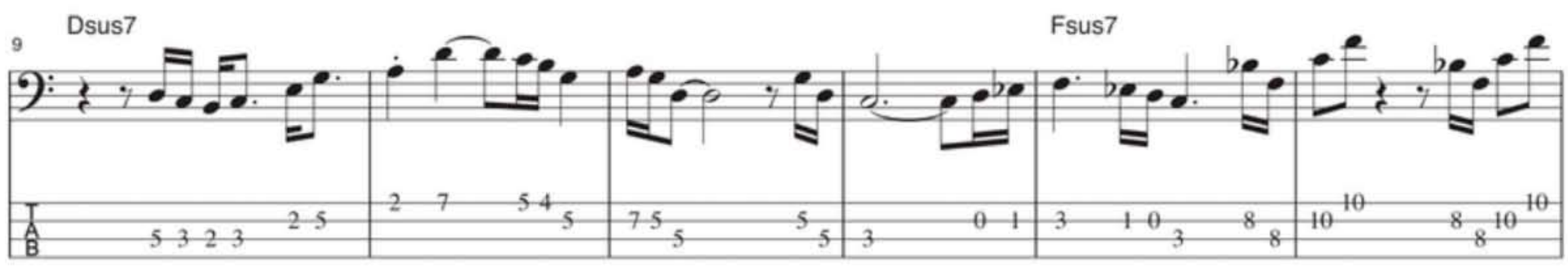
Fsus7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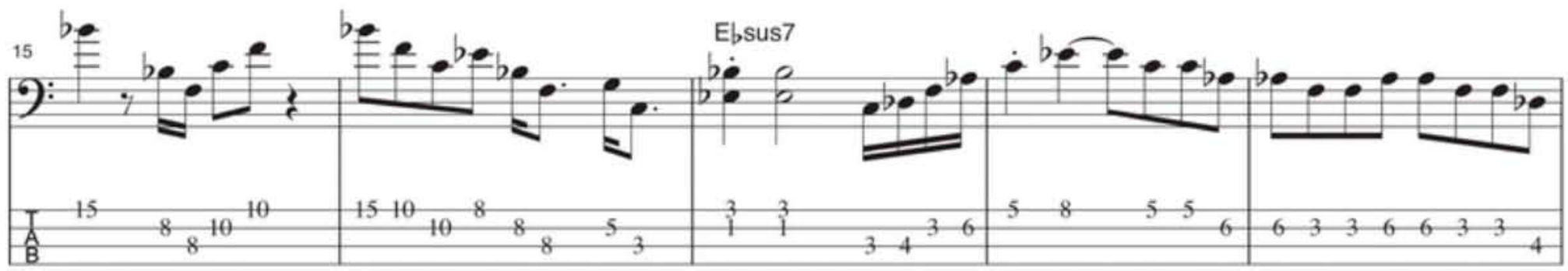
Fsus7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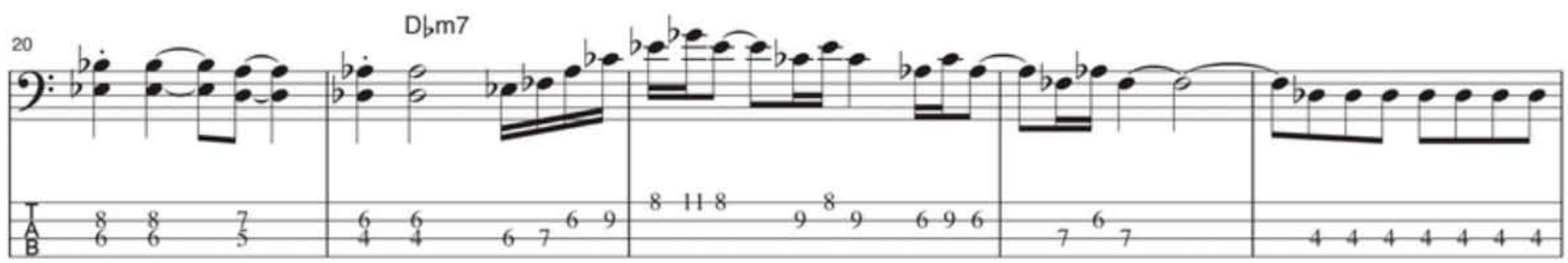
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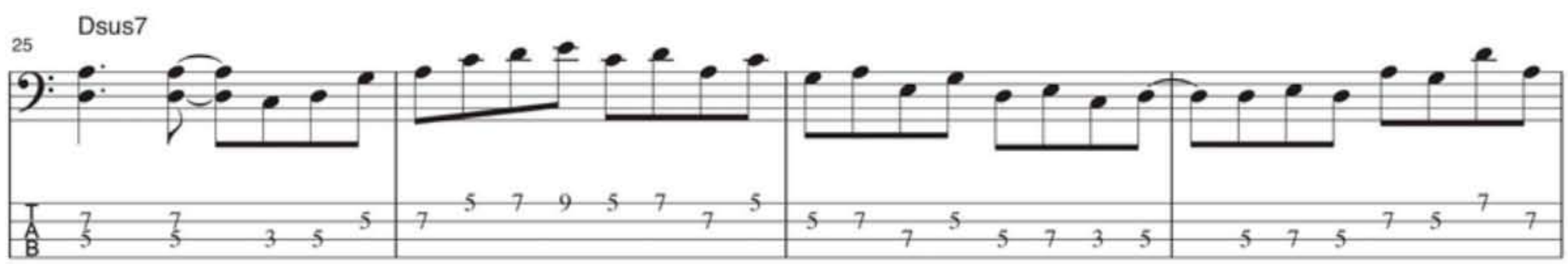
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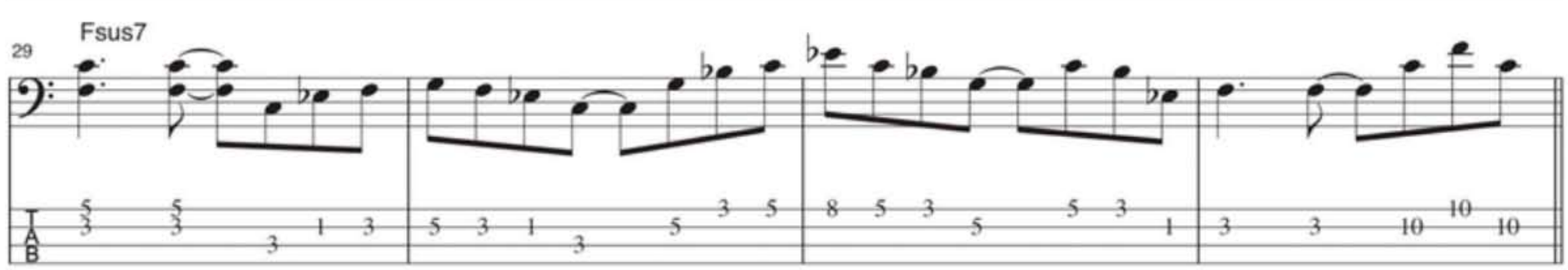
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Fsus7

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up and down the bass through all 12 keys. The problem is how to use sequences like these musically. A good way to do this in a jazz solo is to play a phrase, and then repeat the idea once or twice, changing one or more of the musical elements each time: pitch, rhythm, or tonality.

Bassist Rufus Reid says that a song with a good harmonic structure has a nice *playground*. The chord changes to Herbie Hancock's "Maiden Voyage" (**Ex. 4**) provide the perfect playground on which to improvise musical sequences. Author Ted Gioia, in his book *The Jazz Standards: A Guide to the Repertoire* [Oxford University Press, 2012], writes: "Relying on only four suspended chords and a melody consisting mostly of high held notes, the song conveys a floating unresolved quality that is countered by an urgent rhythmic figure that provides the hook for the whole endeavor."

"Maiden Voyage" shows up on the short list of most-often-played jazz standards. Composed by Hancock in 1965, this modal composition is 32 bars long, but consists of only four chords in four-measure durations: *Dsus7*, *Fsus7*, *Dsus7*, *Fsus7*, *E♭sus7*, *D♭m7*, *Dsus7*, *Fsus7*.

Example 4 demonstrates a jazz solo using sequences over the "Maiden Voyage" harmonic structure. Search the étude for similar rhythms and melodic shapes, and you'll see that some rhythms and melodies are repeated once or twice but change slightly in subsequent incarnations.

Bars 1–8 demonstrate a classic "question and answer" line. The line in bars 1 and 2 over the *Dsus7* is echoed on the *Fsus7* in bars 5 and 6. The melody on the *Dsus7* is transposed up a minor 3rd interval to fit the *Fsus7*. Note the tip of the hat to "The Lick" in bars 2 and 3 (see my October '12 Woodshed). The phrase in bars 3 and 4 is not echoed in bars 7 and 8. This is where our sequence technique comes into play: Change a sequence slightly in subsequent repeats to make the line interesting. Repeat a phrase, but let the sequence change and develop. Use your musical instincts. Question? Answer!

Bars 9–16 borrow heavily from the master tenor saxophonist George Coleman, who delivered possibly his most famous solo on the original Hancock recording of "Maiden Voyage." Coleman repeatedly uses a rhythmic sequence, playing two 16th-notes and leading into various target notes. In bars 14–15, he plays a sequence in 4ths, similar to the pattern in Ex. 2.

The arpeggio in bars 17–19 outlines some hip notes on the *E♭sus7* chord. This is basically a *D♭maj9* arpeggio over the *E♭sus7* sound. The sequence in bars 21–23 is similar, transposed to fit the *D♭m7* chord. You can think of this as an *Emaj9* arpeggio that describes the sound of the *D♭m7*. (It's notated here as an *F♭maj7* arpeggio, since a *D♭* Dorian scale has seven flats.)

The pattern in bar 26 is heard again at the end of bar 29, and again at the end of bar 30, transposed to fit the harmony. Note the use of a *C* major pentatonic scale over the *Dsus7* chord, and an *E♭* major pentatonic scale over the *Fsus7* chord. By using repeated phrases and sequences, we create a logical solo statement that the listener can follow.

Check out some of the classic recordings of "Maiden Voyage" (see below) and hear how great soloists use sequences. To challenge yourself even further, write out your own solo over the "Maiden Voyage" changes. Use sequences in your melodic and rhythmic development, and most of all, trust your ears! **BP**

INFO

5 ESSENTIAL RECORDINGS OF "MAIDEN VOYAGE"

- Herbie Hancock, *Maiden Voyage* [Blue Note, 1965; Ron Carter on bass]
- Bobby Hutcherson, *Happenings* [Blue Note, 1966; Bob Cranshaw on bass]
- Denny Zeitlin, *Zeitgeist* [Columbia, 1967, reissued Mosaic Select, 2009; Joe Halpin on bass]
- Gonzalo Rubalcaba, *The Trio* [Blue Note, 2003; Brian Bromberg on bass]
- Robert Glasper, *In My Element* [Blue Note, 2007; Vicente Archer on bass]

TODAY'S LESSON:
ARTISTS PLAYING AGUILAR

THE BASS IN THE CARIBBEAN

Adiós Salsa . . . It's Timba Time!

BY MARLON BISHOP

"I DON'T WANT TO OFFEND ANYBODY, BUT ...," STARTS JORGE BRINGAS, A TOP Cuban bass player living in the New York area. Whenever anybody begins a sentence like that, you know it's probably going to be good. "No offense to salsa players, but salsa just sticks more to just the basics. It's less adventurous."

Bringas prefers *timba*, the style of choice for dance bands in Cuba since the late 1980s. To the untrained ear, it sounds something like salsa—both styles evolved from the Afro-Cuban *son*, after all—but timba goes a step further, taking in elements from jazz, funk, and traditional music and processing them into hard-hitting party jams. And that's very good news for bass players getting tired of the same old Latin grooves and looking for something new.

Bringas says timba's first steps began when the Latin-jazz supergroup Irakere (whose members have included such giants as Chucho Valdés and Arturo Sandoval) started recording more dancefloor-friendly material in hopes of winning over mainstream Cuban audiences. One of the members of that band, flautist José Luis Cortés, founded the first true timba band in 1988, called NG La Banda. The idea was to use all the musical know-how of Latin jazz to make heavier, rawer music that would be popular in the barrios. The group's bassist was Feliciano Arango, a young virtuoso who had studied with Orlando "Cachaito" López, the legendary bassist featured in the film *Buena Vista Social Club*. "For years and years the bass could never leave old patterns they were doing," says Arango. "But in timba, we liberated ourselves."

Arango radically altered the classic son *tumbao*, or groove, to make bass lines with more individual personality. According to Arango, he was able to do this because of a change in the *clave*. The clave is a kind of rhythmic key that guides Afro-Cuban music; it's a two-bar phrase that locks all the different instruments into the groove. The son clave is the pattern used in most popular Cuban music over the last century, as well as in salsa. **Example 1** outlines the son clave and a typical bass tumbao you might find in salsa or classic Cuban music.

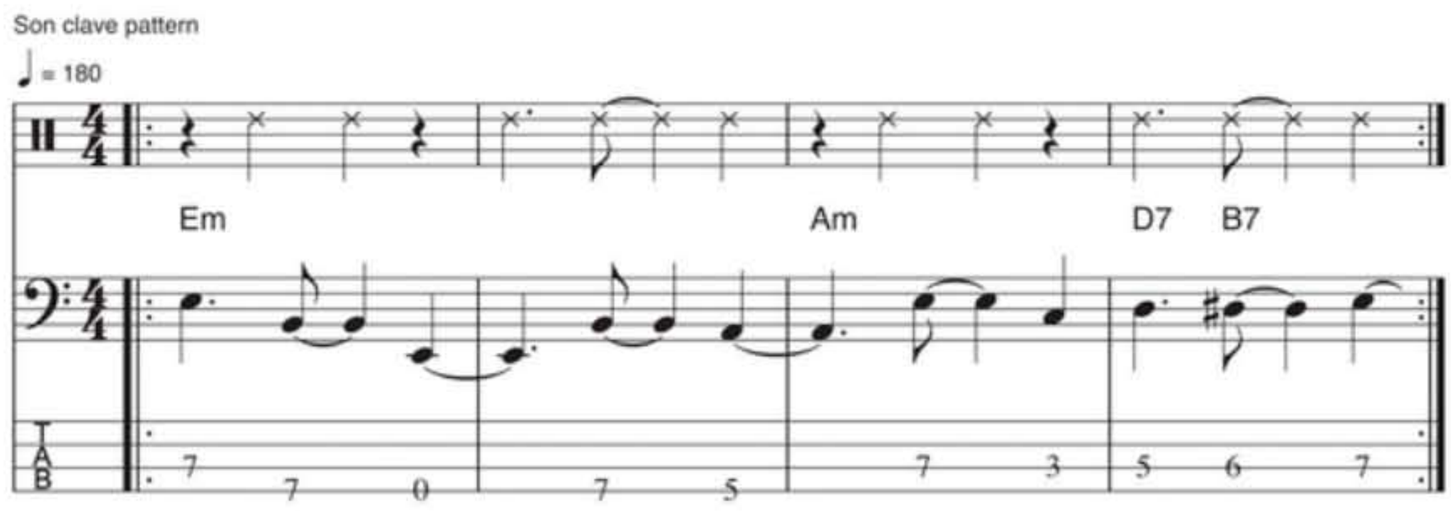
With timba, bandleaders started using a different clave in their music: the *rumba clave*. In the United States, the word "rumba" refers to a kind of ballroom dance, but in Cuba, it's an old-school Afro-Cuban street jam using percussion and voices, with its own canon of distinct rhythms and drums. As seen in **Ex. 2**, the rumba clave is subtly different from the son clave—it only displaces one note by an eighth-note rest—but it changes the music's entire feel. The bass line in Ex. 2 (provided by Jorge Bringas) is a basic timba line guided by the rumba clave. Play it and you'll notice a much funkier feel right away.

"When the clave changed, there were no expectations about how to play, so you could do new things and give it more flavor," explains Arango. "Soon other bands saw NG La Banda and noticed that the bass was doing new things, and audiences were really into it. I knew that you could play this way in Cuban music, and that it would become a source of inspiration for people."

Feliciano Arango

Arango did more than just change the clave—he gave up the upright and the Ampeg Baby Bass in favor of a 6-string electric. He seasoned his playing with melodies and double-stops, and employed advanced techniques like slap and tapping. While bringing in ideas from funk and fusion, he also researched Cuba's rich spiritual and folkloric traditions, taking rhythmic phrases from the sacred *batá* drums and playing them on the bass. Somehow, the people kept on dancing. All of this fancy bass playing was happening in mainstream Cuban pop music.

EX. 1



INFO

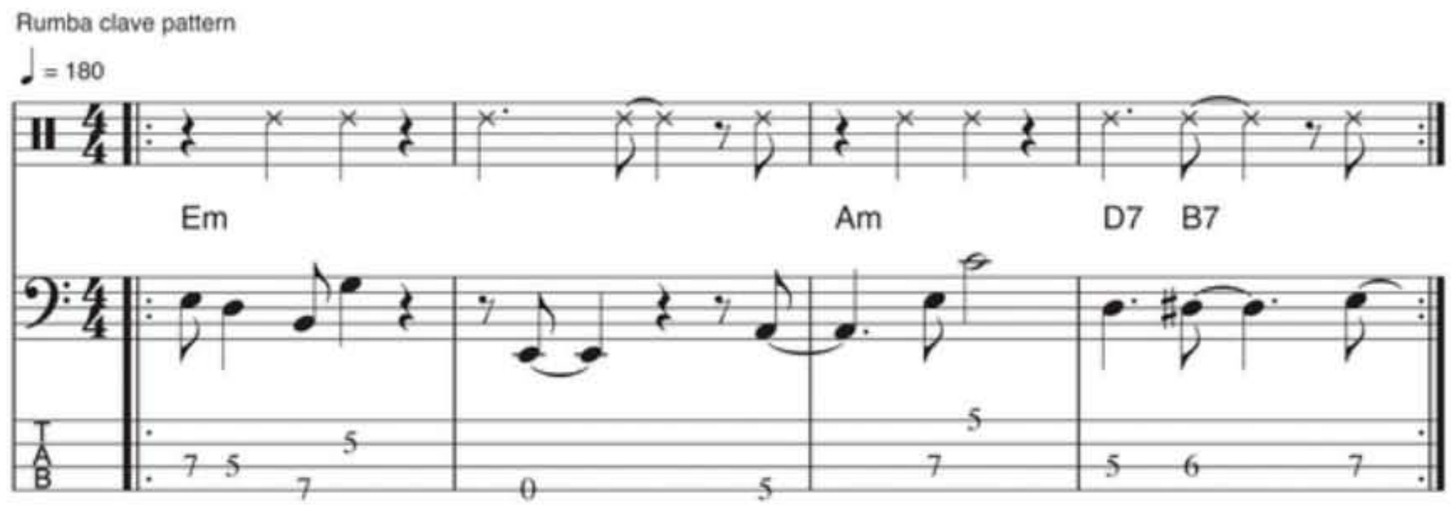
MARLON BISHOP

Marlon Bishop is an arts writer and radio producer who reports on global music for a number of media outlets. He writes for MTV's world music division and produces radio documentaries for Afropop Worldwide.

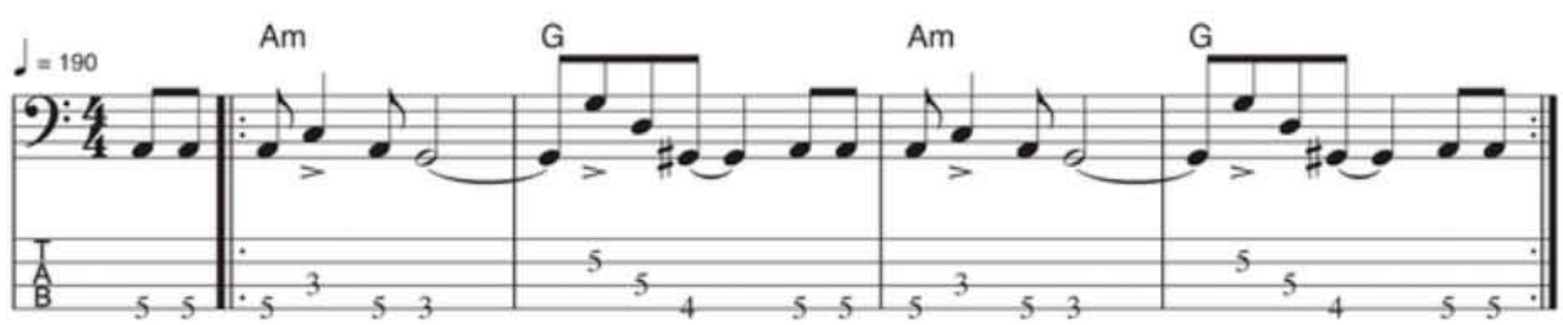
Jorge Bringas, the New York-area timba player, calls Feliciano Arango his bass hero. "He's like Jaco, but with clave. After Feliciano, all Cuban music has been influenced by him." Bringas says that the timba style is not only about fancy bass tricks (although there are plenty of them); it's also about solid, driving grooves. "There are a lot of songs in timba where the personality comes from the bass. You can usually recognize a song by the bass tumbao alone."

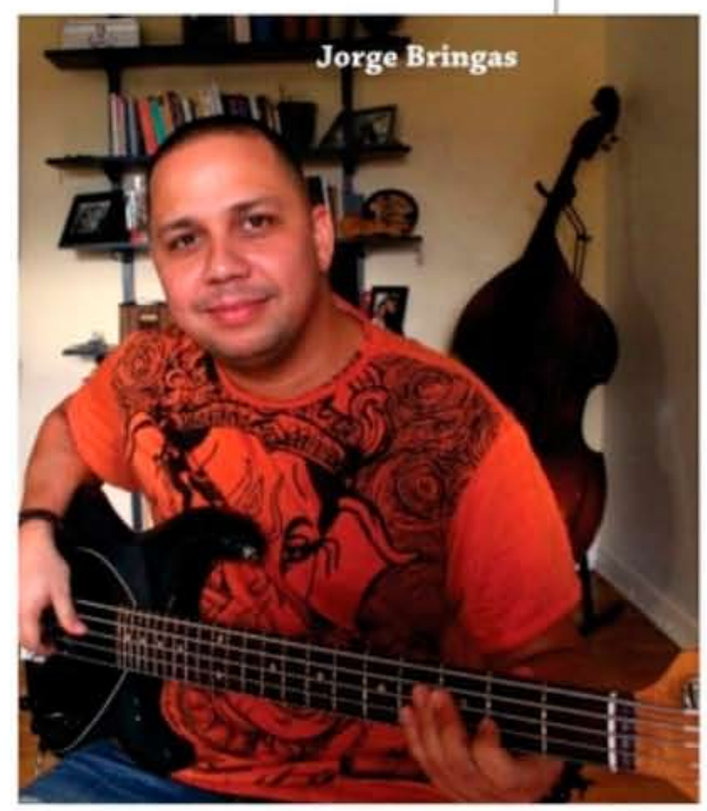
In his New Jersey home studio, Bringas showed me a classic Arango part from the NG La Banda song "El Trágico," shown in **Ex. 3**. It's a straightforward line, but the kind of thing you'd never hear in earlier incarnations of Cuban music. On the recording, the line anchors the song in a sea

EX. 2



EX. 3





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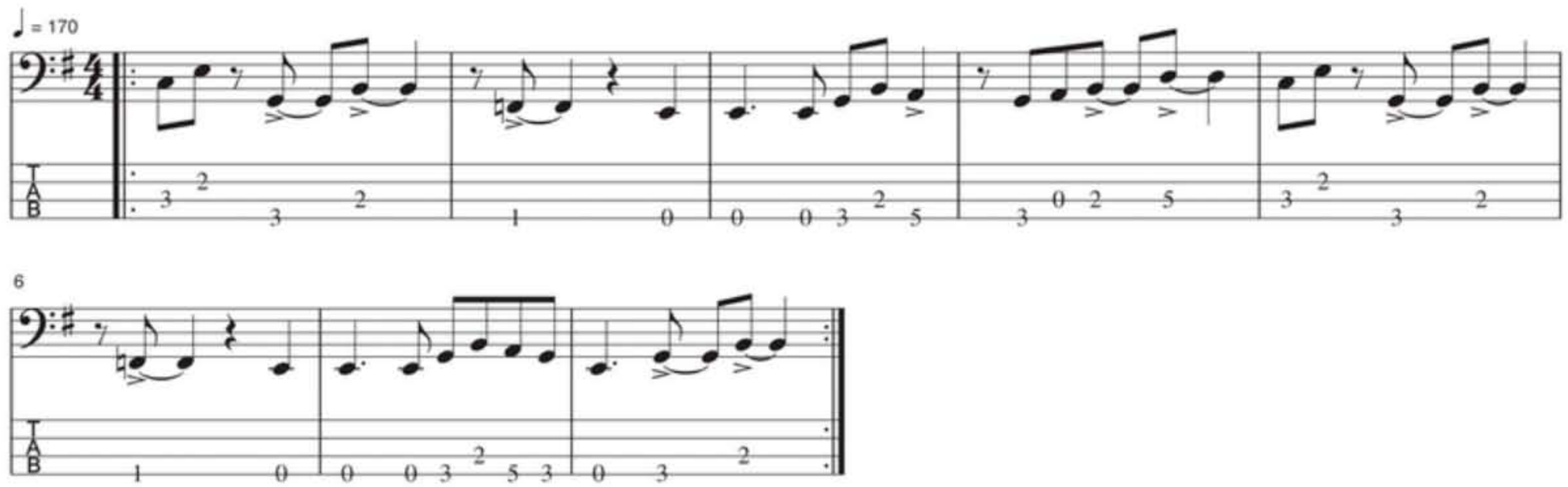
of percussion that includes drum set, congas, bells, and timbales, all playing at full force. The fury of percussion found in timba makes sense; after all, the word "timba" refers to the point of musical climax in a rumba jam.

Another of Bringas' favorite timba lines is transcribed in **Ex. 4**. It's from a song by Alain Perez, a talented Cuban timba bassist living in Spain. This one is a little trickier. Afro-Cuban bass playing in general involves playing around the pulse—it's common to almost never hit on the *one* in a son or salsa tune. While you will hit the *one* here and there in this line, the feel floats around the strong beats, making it hard to catch the groove at first.

The lines transcribed here are just the basics. Check out NG La Banda recordings from the '90s, such as *Échale Limón* [MSI Music, 1993], to see where it goes from here. The one word of advice that Feliciano Arango gives bassists is to not get too caught up in the music's flashiness and forget the point. "You can experiment with all the possibilities out there, but it's not about sitting there and doing a solo. You have to respect the dancer. Never lose the flavor." **BP**

EX. 4



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
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(All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title: Bass Player 2. Publication No: 1050-785X 3. Filing Date: October 1, 2012
4. Issue Frequency: Monthly with an extra issue in December
5. No. of Issues Published Annually: 13 6. Annual Subscription Price: $18.99
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not Printer):
NewBay Media, LLC, 1111 Bayhill Drive, Suite 125, San Bruno, CA 94066-3040
Contact Person: Ulises Cabrera Telephone: 212-378-0431
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher:
NewBay Media, LLC, 28 East 28th Street, 12th floor, New York, NY 10016
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor:
Bill Amstutz, Publisher; 28 East 28th Street, 12th floor, New York, NY 10016
Brian Fox, Editor; 1111 Bayhill Drive, Suite 125, San Bruno, CA 94066-3040
Kevin Owens, Managing Editor; 1111 Bayhill Drive, Suite 125, San Bruno, CA 94066-3040
10. Owner: The Wicks Group of Companies, LLC 405 Park Avenue, Suite 702, New York, NY 10022
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding One Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or other Securities: None
12. Tax Status: The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during preceding twelve months
13. Publication: Bass Player
14: Issue Date for Circulation Data: September 2012

15: Extent and Nature of Circulation	Avg. No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total No. Copies (Net Press Run)	53,989	47,316
b. PAID CIRCULATION		
1. Individual Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541	25,280	24,224
2. Copies Requested by Employers for Distribution to Employees by Name or Position Stated on PS Form 3541		
3. Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid or Requested Distribution Outside USPS	6,383	5,065
4. Requested Copies Distributed by Other Mail Classes Through the USPS		
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation	31,663	29,289
d. NONREQUESTED DISTRIBUTION		
1. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-Country Copies Included on PS Form 3541	988	1,033
2. Free or Nominal Rate In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541		
3. Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS		
4. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail	412	1000
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution	1,400	2,033
f. Total Distribution	33,063	31,322
g. Copies Not Distributed	20,926	15,994
h. Total	53,989	47,316
i. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	95.77%	93.51%

16. Publication of Statement of Ownership for a Requester Publication is required and will be printed in the Holiday issue of this publication.

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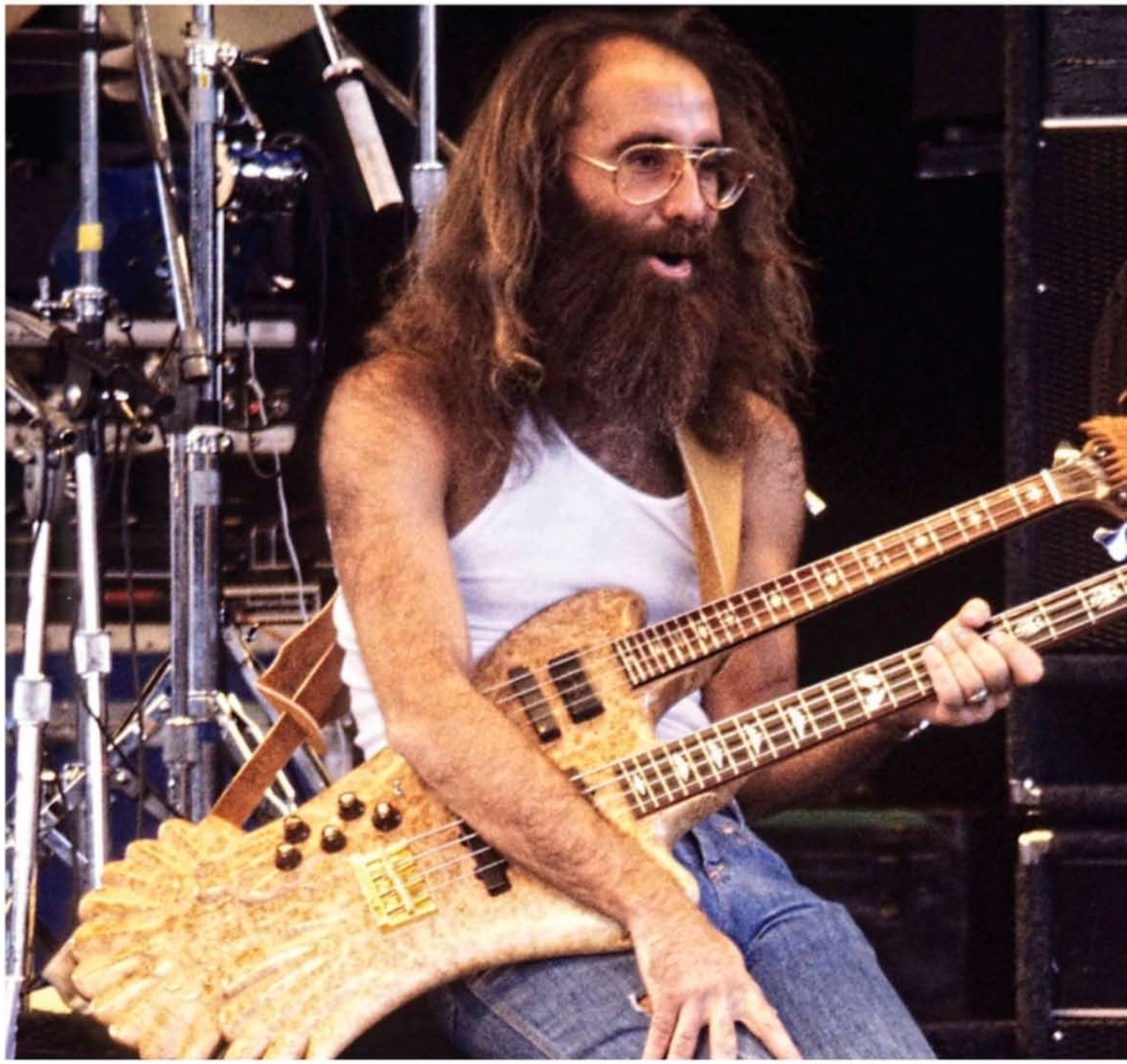


"Jamaica, Say You Will" By Jackson Browne

Leland Sklar's Complete Bass Line

BY BRIAN FOX | PHOTO BY ED PERLSTEIN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

LOS ANGELES IN THE EARLY '70S WAS TO SINGER-SONGWRITERS WHAT Detroit and Memphis were to soul music just a few years prior. And as the rhythm-section backbone for artists like Jackson Browne and James Taylor, Leland Sklar was the James Jamerson and Duck Dunn of the singer-songwriter set.

Way back in the January/February 1992 issue of BASS PLAYER, we transcribed one of Sklar's most celebrated bass lines, his beautifully crafted melodic line on James Taylor's 1977 hit, "Your Smiling Face." This month we turn to his work with another songwriting giant, Jackson Browne.

INFO

LISTEN

Jackson Browne, *Jackson Browne* [Asylum, 1972]

How did you first get into Los Angeles' singer-songwriter scene?

I was in a band called Wolfgang at the end of the '60s, and John Fishbeck—who owned Crystal Recording Studio and engineered a lot of the early Stevie Wonder records—was a really close friend of our drummer, "Bugs" Pemberton. One of John's friends was James Taylor, who he'd bring to our rehearsals to hang out. When James got his first offer to play at the Troubadour, they asked if I'd play with him. I thought it'd be one gig; it turned into 20 years. As soon as James hit, [drummer] Russ Kunkel and I started getting a ton of work. One of the calls I got was for this guy named Jackson Browne.

What do you remember about sessions for your first record with Jackson?

It was a Crystal Recording Studio, and David Orshoff was the engineer. I don't know if he was the co-producer with Jackson or the producer—it was nebulous. The studio had probably one of the biggest control rooms ever, and you'd listen to playbacks in there and just cream—it sounded so great. Jesse Ed Davis came in and played the guitar solo on "Doctor, My Eyes." He basically pulled his guitar out of the case, said, "Let me hear the song," played that solo, and that was it.

There were no rehearsals for anything. Jackson would sit down at the piano or with his guitar and play it, and we would craft parts. There were no charts or anything, and there was no pressure. We were in for long hours, and we'd cut something, and sometimes we'd come back a few days later and go, "Let's try that one again, now that we're in the right groove." It was a rich period in the studio. People weren't clock-watching, and we had a lot of leeway.

The album probably stretched out six months or so. Jackson would come in and do some vocals, then decide to change a line. It didn't take long to cut the tracks, but the entire process took a while. We'd all go off and do other things, and Jackson would do some gigs to make some money. It was a very fluid, organic project, which most of the projects in that time were.

"Jamaica" is just one of countless tracks where your consistency, and especially your attention to note duration, is brilliant.

I know a lot of bass players who are very methodical and intellectual in their playing. I'm not. When a song starts, I go into another space and just start playing. I go with my gut: if it feels like the note wants to come out, that's what comes out; if it wants to ring through the whole thing, I do it. I don't have any rules, and I don't give it any kind of conscious method. I'm a fly-by-the-seat-of-my-pants kind of player, and I think that stylistically, that's to my benefit. I've worked so much with singer-songwriters, where you really need to respond to the vocal. A lot of times, I'm listening to them breathe, and I'm moving with them in this little dance. If they lift their breath, I lift off, too, so there's this beautiful little space in between. But it's not a conscious effort.

With guys like Jackson Browne and James Taylor I try to figure out what I can do to justify my playing; their songs are complete with just them playing. So I have to find a way to fit into it by responding to their performance to enhance it and to lift it to another level. If it required me to play little staccato notes, I would do that, and if it required me to do long notes, I would do that. And that album

"You find yourself in a dream state when you hear songs like 'Jamaica,'" says Lee, who has gone on to work with artists as varied as Billy Cobham, Lyle Lovett, Phil Collins, and Toto. After checking out the backstory of Lee's work with Jackson and James, get mellow and dig into the transcription itself. Lee's line is a tour de force of taste and tact, and a potent primer on precision and pocket playing.

had it all. I love Jackson. If he ever wanted to work again, I'd do it in a second—he's one of those truly rare gifted artists who I feel blessed to have been able to work with.

What bass did you record with?

I'm sure I used a '62 Fender Jazz Bass. The main bass I use right now in the studio we built in around '74. Up until that point I was using this '62 Jazz Bass that I completely carved up with peace symbols. It was totally reflective of the times—I had a picture of Frank Zappa decoupaged on the back. I used that on James' early stuff, Jackson's, and *Spectrum* with Bill Cobham. I still have it, and I love it. In fact, I just did a gig with Phil Collen from Def Leppard where he asked me to come and play 'Red Baron.' I said that I'd bring the bass I played on that Billy Cobham record, and he freaked out.

Did you record with a click track?

When you're working with Russ Kunkel on drums, time is not an issue. If you turn on a click at the beginning of the song, and if you turn it on in the last eight bars of the song, it's probably damn near exact, but the song has taken a ride during its course; it's far more expressive than it would be if we had cut with a click. I'm not a fan of the click, but I'm a realist, too, so I've worked with it for years. But given my druthers, I'd really rather have things feel more human.

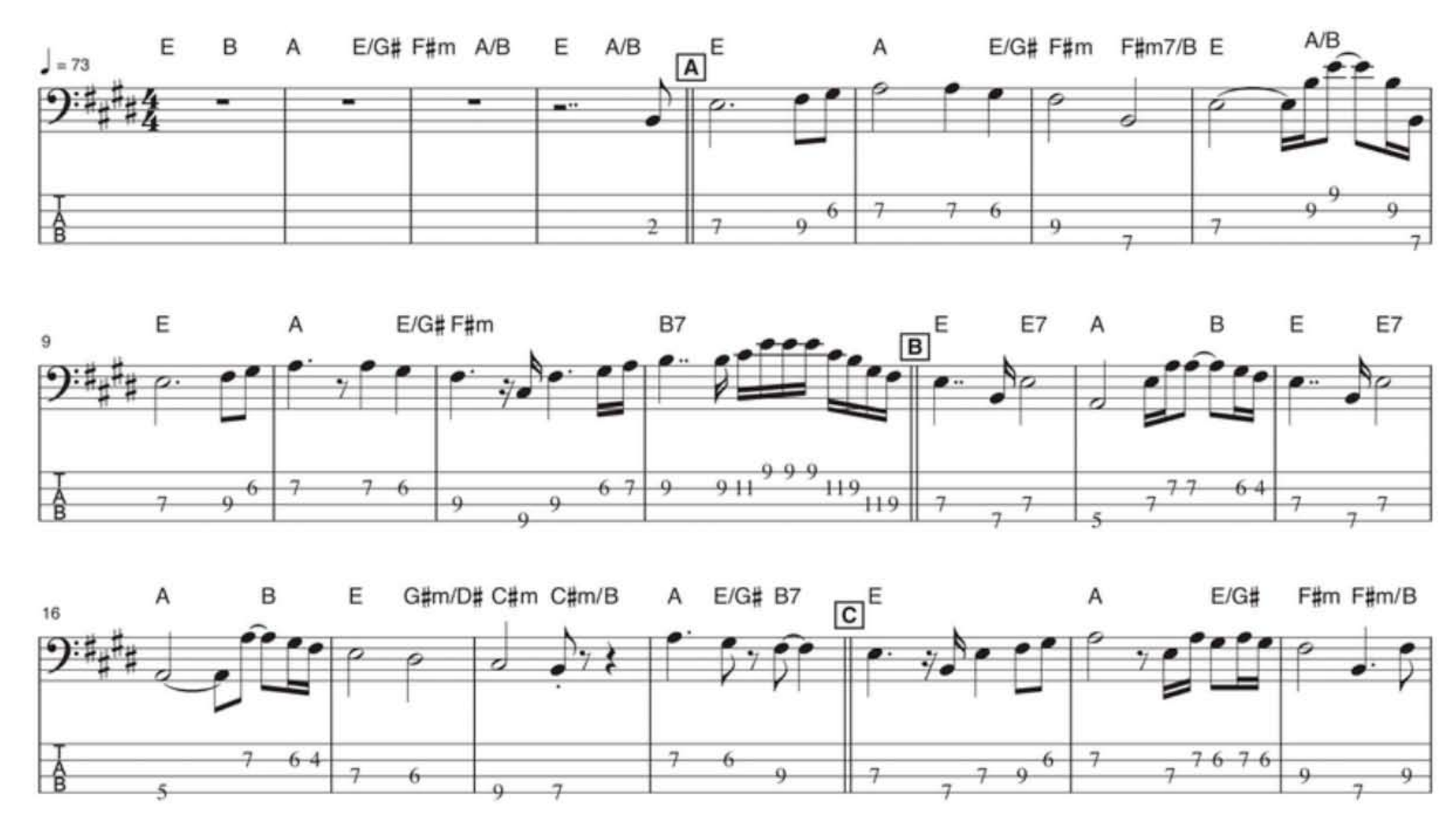
What other details from the session do you remember?

Jackson sang everything live with us. Whether or not that ended up being the final vocal track, I don't know because I wouldn't have been there. But he's one of those guys who will sing it live, and unless there's an issue with mic leakage, every live vocal take was as good as you're going to get. He's so consistent, every time he'd walk up to the mic, just the way James was. Everything was a performance—there wasn't a throwaway.

Now it's 2,500 albums later, and it's hard to remember exactly what went on. My reflection of that was really the entire experience of making that record with Jackson, and sitting there song after song and marveling at this guy's gifts as a lyricist, as a musician, and as a singer. Jackson is one of the most exemplary artists of that ilk. He's an amazing artist. **BP**

"Jamaica, Say You Will"

Transcription by Brian Fox



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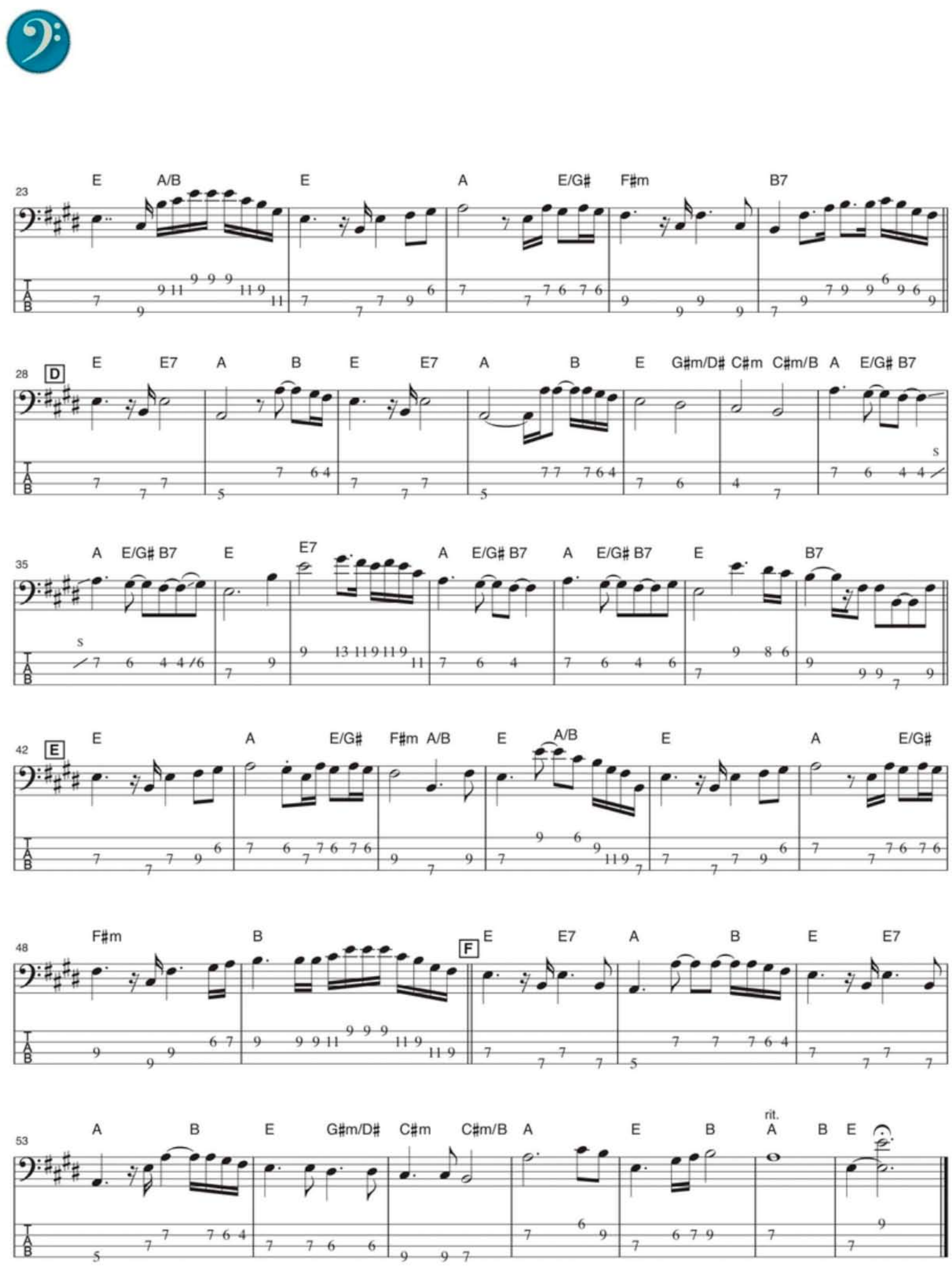
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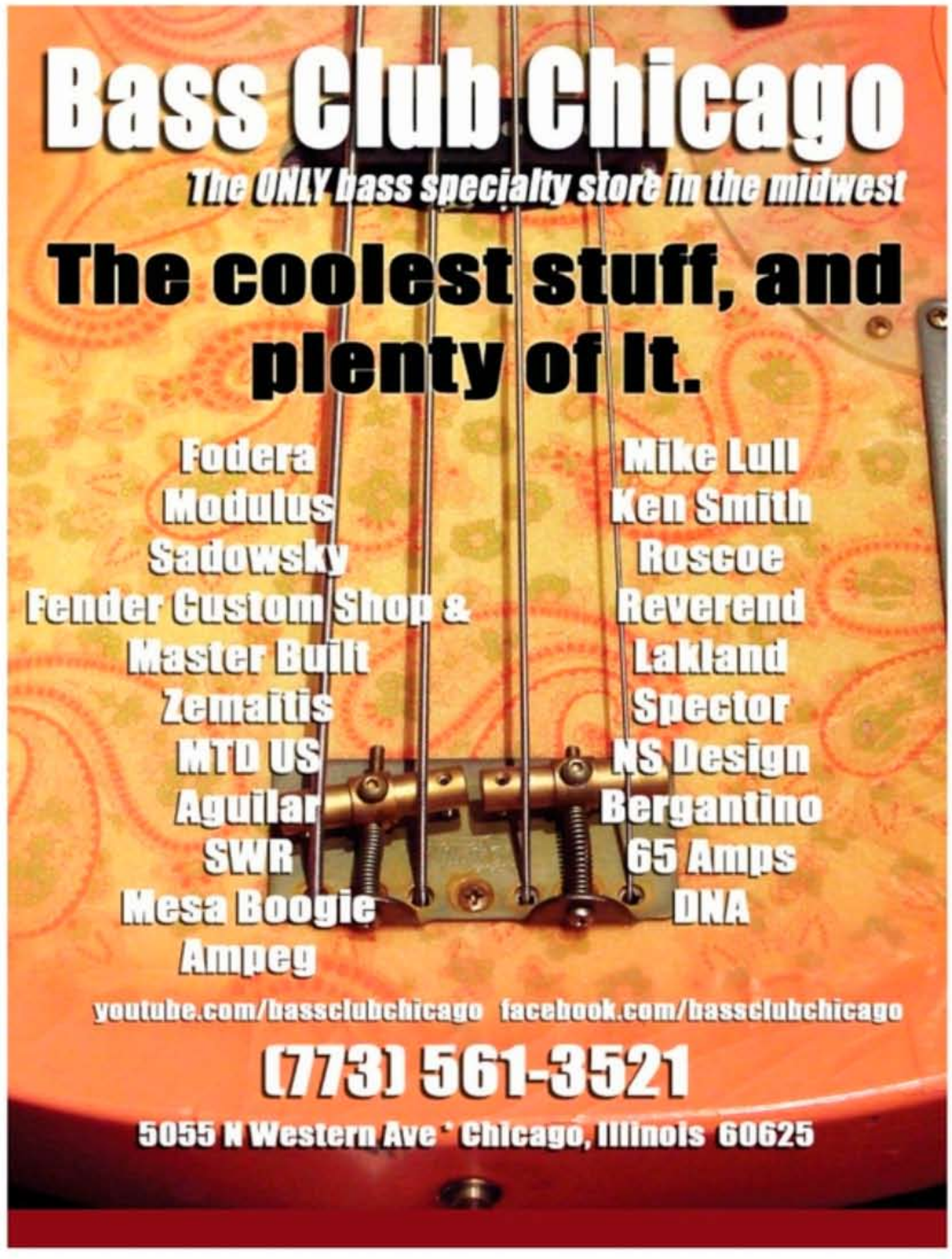

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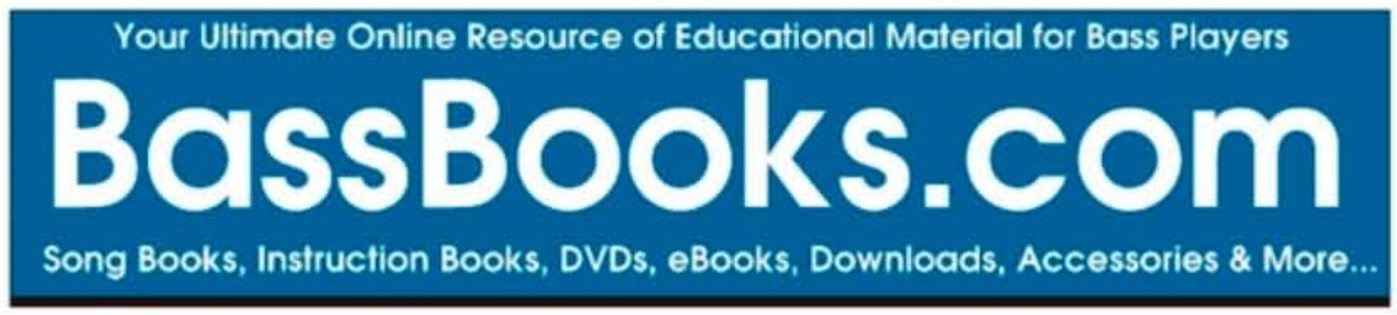

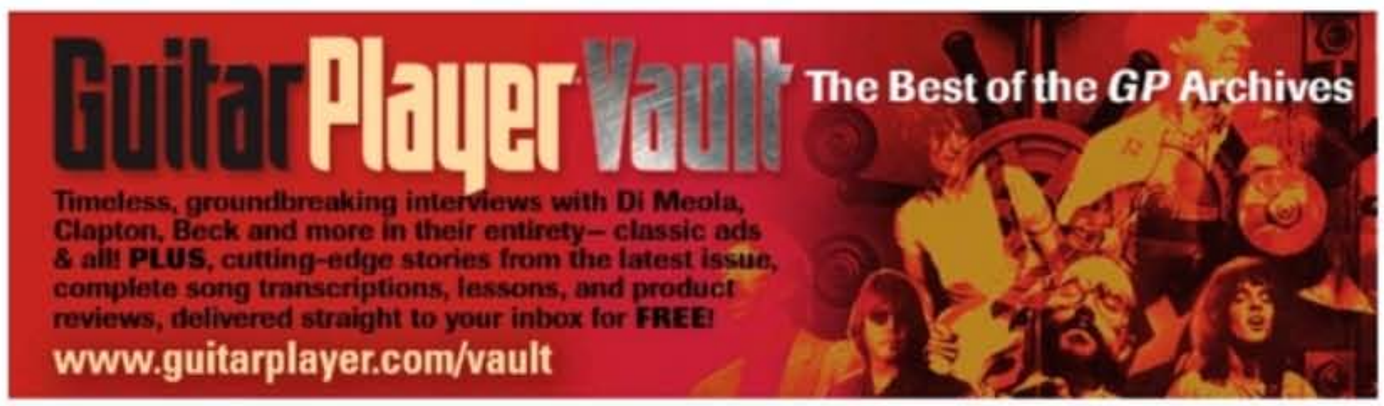

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Over the past 20-plus years with Bass Player, *Art Director and photographer Paul Haggard has accumulated a shelf full of broken cameras and some dusty memories. He will recount some over the next few columns until either he can't remember any more, or they fail to be interesting—whichever comes first.*

OUTTAKES

Photograph, from August 2000

THE MOMENT OF INSPIRATION HAPPENED IN THE CAR. Between you and me, that is where most of my inspiration comes—not really for any other reason but the fact that I'm on my way to the shoot, and I haven't come up with anything yet. Pressure can be a beguiling muse, for good or bad. In this case, associate editor Bill Leigh was sitting in the passenger seat. He can be a beguiling muse as well, but I will spare us that digression. We are on our way to the airport amidst a shifting pile of equipment baggage.

Bill turned to me. "So, do you have any ideas for the cover shot?"

"Sushi."

"Really? Sushi? What do you mean, sushi?"

The plane landed in my favorite airport, Burbank. Favorite because it seems—in all its deco simplicity—to be clinging to a bygone era of passenger flight, where they let you disembark from both doors of the plane onto the tarmac via those mobile staircases, and I can pretend I am a 1968 London fashion photographer arriving in Monaco for a *Look* magazine photo spread. In my mind I am trying to decide the best way to greet Princess Grace, but then we get to baggage claim, and the girl in leopard spandex twirling her hair while talking to her boyfriend on a cell phone reminds me I am in Burbank. I am jolted back to reality.

We drive the rental car a few miles until we arrive at Tony Kanal's house—a simple, modern Hollywood home beautifully appointed with exotic Balinese treasures and Hindu antiquities. I am struck unexpectedly by his gravelly East coast accent (*think Chaz Palminteri meets Marge Simpson*), and eventually the conversation makes its way to the photos.

"Sushi."

"Really? Sushi? What do you mean, sushi?"

I explain. "I know that No Doubt's imagery often leans toward the surreal, so I picture you eating sushi from the top of your Sunburst Yamaha BB415." Knowing how ridiculous this sounds, I say it mustering the confidence of a used car salesman—just shy of swagger. Tony narrows his eyes and tilts his head slightly while contemplating this and I ready myself to guard against a quick punch.

"I like it."

"Really? You like it?" Eureka. While Bill does the interview I go buy a hundred bucks worth of sushi. We eat most of it, but some makes it into the shoot. The chartreuse wall in Tony's kitchen is perfect. [Tony, I will do a shoot in *your* house any day. Call me.]

The next day in the office I run into the Editor, Richard Johnston. Richard says, "I was thinking about the cover and I was hoping you shot him really playing hard—really digging in. You know, very bass-player-ly."

"Actually, I shot him eating sushi."

"Really? Sushi? What do you mean, sushi?" —PAUL HAGGARD

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